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New-York Daily Tribune

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17, 1904.

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[BY TELEGRAPH TO THE TRIBUNE.]

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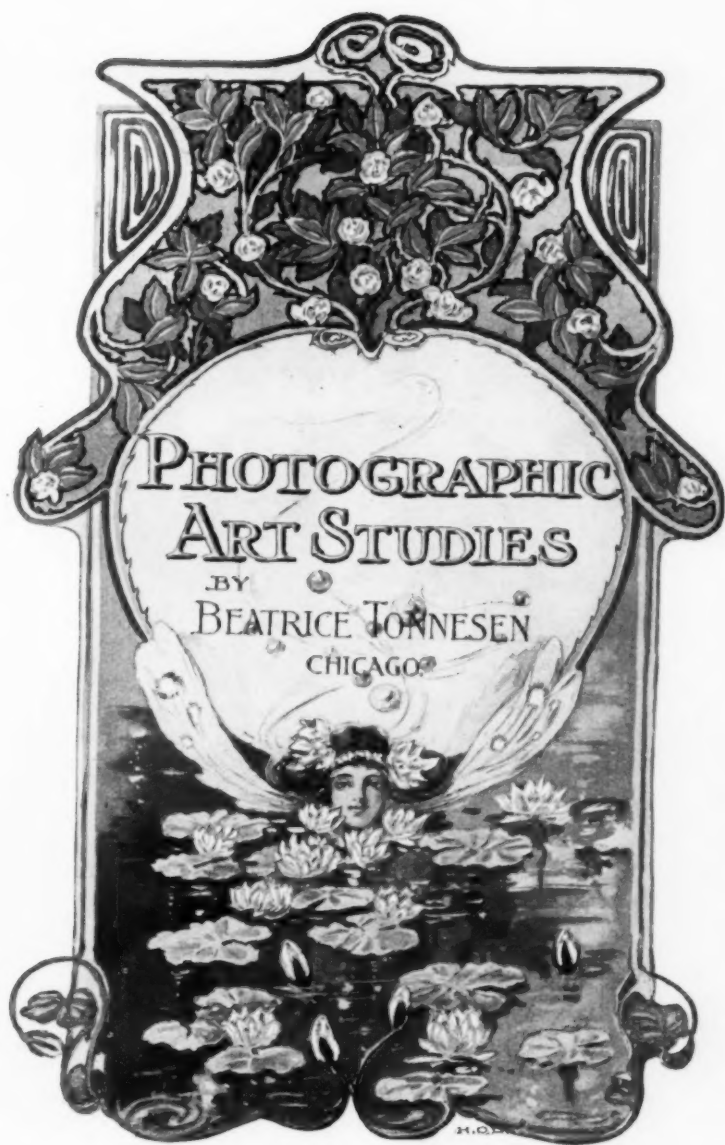
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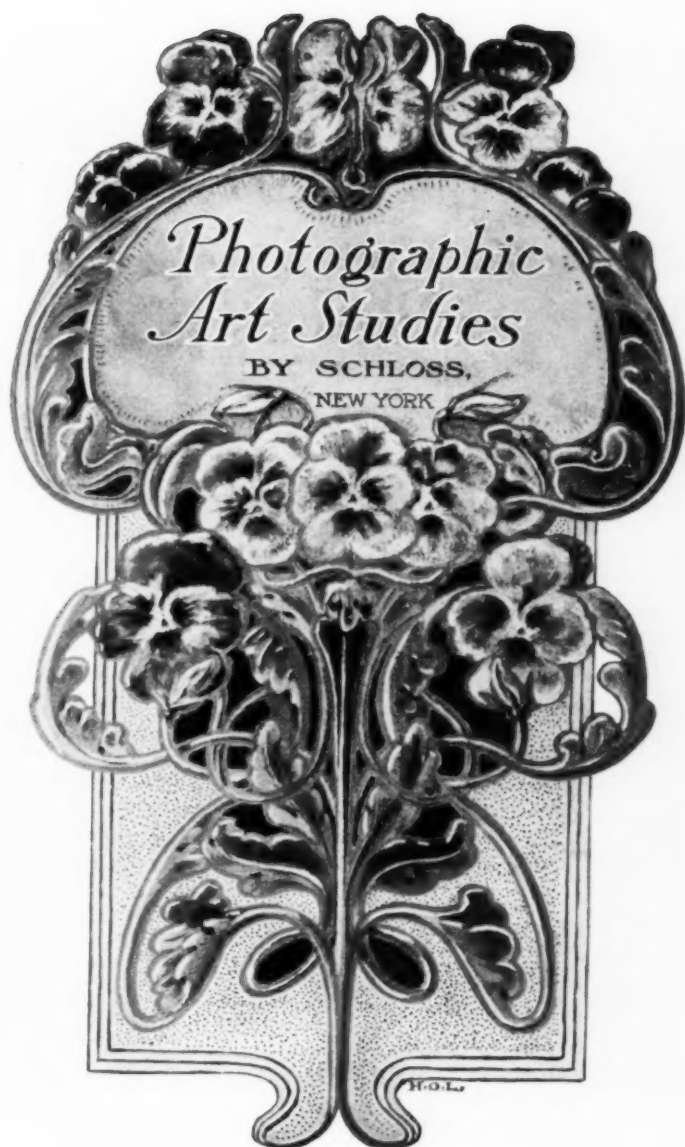
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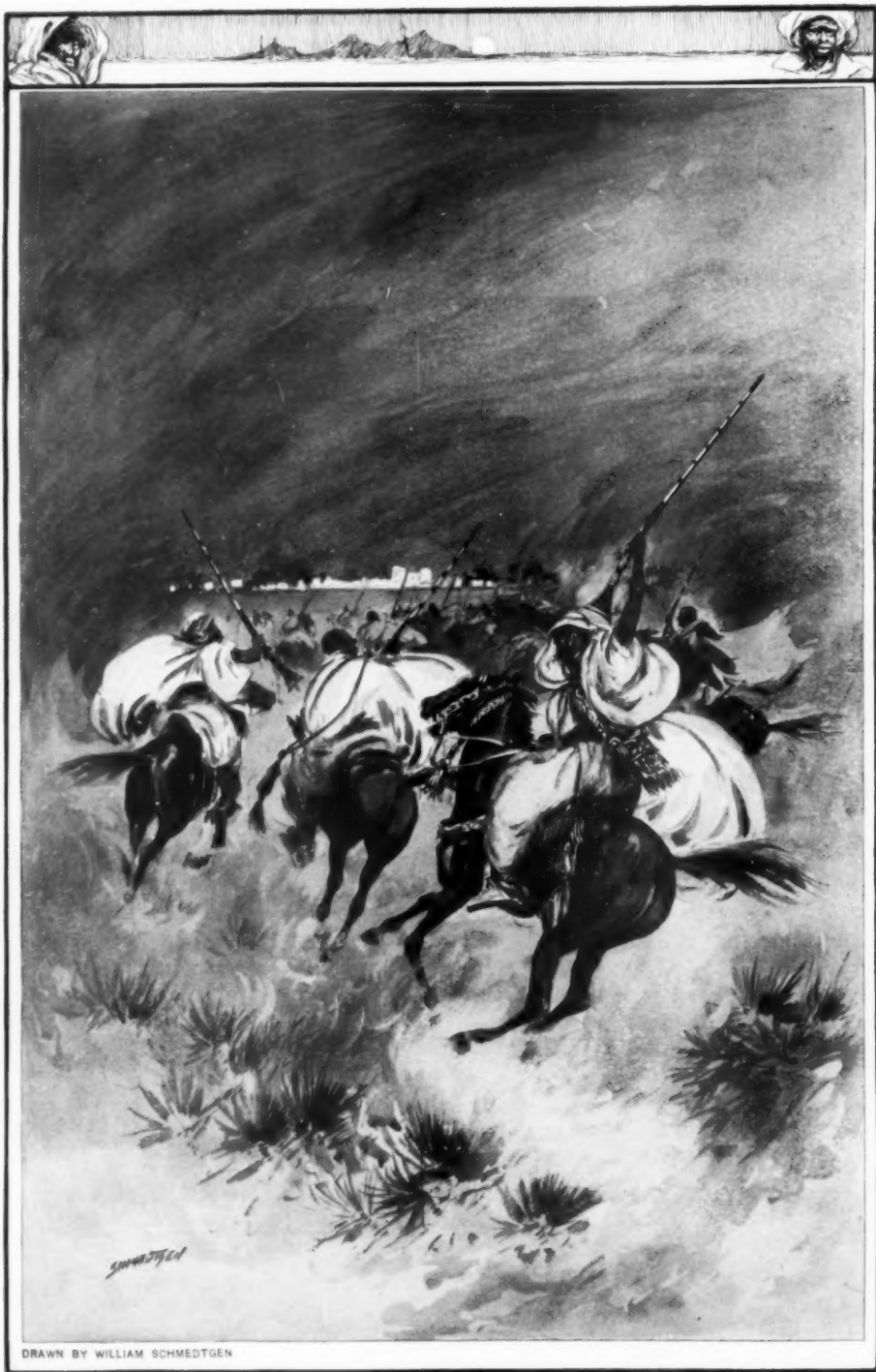
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DRAWN BY WILLIAM SCHMEDTGEN

“The Touaregs are splendid robbers; Frenchmen call them ‘the Pirates of the Desert.’”

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SAND-DAISY

BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS

Of peaceful pleasures there is none greater than that enjoyed by a botanist when he enters strange lands and finds himself surrounded by a new flora. Lovely things, long familiar as pictures, or in the mummy state of the herbarium, now burst upon his sight, alive, and nature holds to him a brimming cornucopia of those flowers not unknown, yet unseen until now.

It chanced that I walked upon the great hills that front the sea in North Africa; and here, nigh Algiers, for the first time found *Iris stylosa* in her home. During January and onward this beautiful blossom nestles here in the grass-like foliage; and her familiar lilac loveliness, her little heart touched with gold, her perfect habit and her fragrance—as of primroses from an English springtime—brought delight to me. Overhanging a bank of red earth she first met my search, and anon I found her on the edge of vineyards, or sunk in dewy, northward-facing hedges, or clustering safely within dense tangles of the prickly pear—that gigantic opuntia whose silver-gray lights every hill about Algiers.

And as I plucked, there came "Sand-daisy," so that henceforth in memory the flower and the girl will be forever linked and wedded.



She was not beautiful, yet a haunting fascination emanated from her, like Eastern odors of spice or fruit. I knew her for a Kabyle by her uncovered face. She lacked, too, the Arab swarthiness, and instead of the customary white *haik* their women wear, Sand-daisy was clad in the red and rose colors that all Kabyles love. She had a frank, childish face; as yet she trusted the world; but her eyes were a dreamer's eyes and curiously full of thought for one so young; her pretty mouth possessed some character; her hands, despite her rough life and the heavy tasks to which they had been put, were, I think, the most beautiful that ever I saw.

She was sixteen, and under her ruddy garments, ragged but classic in their simple lines, a female of natural shape was manifest. No harsh restriction spoilt one lovely contour of her; no distorting bond strangled her lithe waist; no steel or bone immured her bosom. Each natural beauty, each curve and slope, round limb, dimpled joint, and dainty breast, was felt unseen. Her rags reached the perfection of human habiliments, in that they clothed her, and while concealing every inch of the maiden but her feet, her arms, her face, hid none of the wonder and joy of her, left her herself—a little, perfect woman, true to nature in every gesture, action and movement. Unfettered, she breathed the hot air, took her way upon the hills or sprawled in the sun, graceful as a kitten; without one shadow of self-consciousness when first we met, she flung down a reed mat on which she worked, and came to me as I bent over *Iris stylosa*.

The girl offered to carry my basket and told me that she knew where a great many other flowers might be gathered. She had been educated at a French school in Algiers, and we understood each other pretty well. When matters interested her, Sand-daisy would mingle her own language and that of the conquerors, but for the most part her meaning was clear. She found me a sympathetic listener and we exchanged confidences. We both had our dreams and ambitions; mine she could not understand; hers were proper to her eyes, that seemed bent upon things to come. Her hopes possessed dignity, propriety and poetry. For me they lifted Sand-daisy into a figure as interesting to the mind as she was restful and grateful to the sight.

Despite her squalid home, pitiful

life and mean-hearted parent, I marked in her a glorious pride of race and the deep-seated, solemn instincts of the Kabyle folk. She had been born here, with a modern French town outspread beneath her vision; she had never seen Kabylia's mountains save as a shadow against the distant south; yet hither her young heart turned and she dreamed of the remote hills; of her kindred; of the pure race from which she had sprung; of the glory of those uplifted dwellings far away; of the winter snows; and of the deserts beneath, where oceans of sand were strewn and took the place of the blue Mediterranean that her eyes had long since wearied of. True to her race, albeit tradition credits the Kabyle with Roman blood, she loved not the sea. The desert was her sea and she longed for it with passionate ardor and sure trust. The yellow plains below and the mountains above; the waterfalls from the hills; the gorges and fastnesses; the green oasis of date set upon the sand, like an emerald in a salver of gold—these things filled her soul and drew it home again. From her mother the girl had learned of them; but her mother was dead, and now Sand-daisy lived with her father and ministered to him, and waited patiently while she hoped great matters from the hidden future.

Under a fig-tree she lived, and round about her home was a hedge of prickly cactus and tall aloes. Perched on the side of the hill, thatched with palm-leaves and built of mud, the whitewashed hovel gleamed like a great flower seen far off. Round about it wild olive climbed the red hill slopes, vines awaited the spring weeding and stuck their dark and tortuous stumps naked above a sea of flowers; heather adorned the waste with snowy sprays;



DRAWN BY WILLIAM SCHMIDTGEN

"I knew ner for a Kabyle by her uncovered face."

lavendula's purple splashed the green; and far beneath spread orange orchards all ablaze with fruit. Craggs of limestone sometimes broke forth against the russet and tawny earth, and the eternal silver-gray and silver-green of the trees and familiar plants festooned the hills and draped each acclivity and slope like a ragged veil through which emerged cultivation. The tilled earth stretched in terraces and climbed in steps; sank broadly to the valleys with wedges and squares of corn or vine; cuddled at the bottom of these terrific slopes upon the smooth ground, and marked by an added warmth of color or luxuriance of foliage, the presence of those little water courses that wound there. Against the prevalent pallor of the wind-kissed olive, the cactus, aloe and eucalyptus, there rose many a turret of dark cypress and shone the splendor of blossoming acacias.

Sand-daisy took me to the flowers, and I told her the name of many a lovely thing her feet had trodden. I showed her the beauty of the black and the golden ophrys, of the velvety orchids, of the great cerinthe by the roadside; of the little romulea, that starred the turf above old graves upon the crown of the hill; of the rosy fedia in the young corn; of the purple toadflax, the fennel, the campion, the cresses and other good things that made a jungle of the vineyards and called for husbandmen to sweep them away; while she spoke of other blossoms as yet in the sheath and bud—flowers beautiful and flowers rare that would come to life here in summer hours when I was gone. She marveled that I carried their names in my head and their pictures in my mind; and then I bade her speak of her own pictures; of the things not seen, yet known and loved; and so I came gradually

to understand her a little, to joy in her joys and lament her sorrows.

Once, setting down the basket which she carried for me, she said:

"I am tired; I will rest and talk to you."

Then she sat down and lifted her eyes to the dark range of the Djurdjura Mountains that ran south under the sunshine.

"I live behind those," she told me. "This is not Sand-daisy, this girl here, who talks to you. Sand-daisy is over there behind the hills. They are only a wall—a common, low wall of stones, broken here and there. The real mountains are beyond. You look up to them; you look up into the blue sky if you want to find them. Those who come here in the winter, like you, see a great cloud there—all white and gold and blue, and they say, 'Tis a mountain of rain going on its way to a far country'; but next day it is there still, all white and gold and blue; and each morning it glows out of the mist when the sun rises above it; and each evening it fades away into darkness again. It is part of the world—white and shining in winter, dim and very far distant afterwards. My home will be there."

She pointed to a spur of the Lesser Atlas, that gleamed against the pale sky like a summer cloud floating gloriously upwards to the zenith long miles away.

"There, behind the snow, I shall live and love a man and have little ones. It is all written for me. There are many of the Berber people, and they are noble and good, and each tribe has young men who would love me if they could see me. Some day there will come one over the sand or the snow, and he will see and love and buy me for a good price, so that my father can let me depart joyfully."

"What manner of man shall he be—of the hills, or of the plains?" I asked.

"I have wondered about that often. The Kabyles are a great people and their tribes are many. But my mother came from midway between the mountain tops and the desert; therefore I have wondered."

"And I am sure you have decided; for you decide everything about yourself."

"Once I loved to think of a husband from the snow, of a house like a swallow's nest hung above some great precipice where the eagles flew, and the monkeys chattered, and the river, so far below, ran along like a skein of silvery silk. I thought of such a home with a man who knew danger very close and whose work took him often hand in hand with death to shoot the panther and the mountain sheep. I have felt the skins of the savage things he killed upon my shoulders; I have felt my lips on the hem of my husband's garment because he risked his life that a wild beast's coat should keep me warm. And then, loving the man in dreams, I feared for him and found my heart throb and my forehead grow wet to think of what might happen to him. I have leapt up screaming, so that the dog barked



"Mefsaud is verv rich."

and my father wakened and used hard words to me. Yes, I have screamed to see my husband tumbling over the red cliffs, and falling forever; or to see him under a lion that buried its teeth and claws in the body I belonged to; I have sprung from the ground weeping dream tears to see my lover swept away by the falling snow, when the hot sun loosens it and sends it thundering downward. All these things are the daily dangers of the hill people; and at home, working for him, I should suffer worse than if I shared the toil of the hunter. Each day I should say, 'He may never come home any more'; each day I should think, 'His little ones may have no father before the sun sets.' Therefore my lovershall not be such a man."

"You are so full of fearful thoughts! Such a soft heart! Marry none of these wild monsters of the mountains or the desert. Take my advice and seek for a house-dweller and a comfortable man. How

good to have a shop in the bazar and to know that your husband was sitting in it safe from peril; how good to think that when the strangers came, they would go to your lord and buy in his shop so that you would be very rich and your children very happy!"

"Happy with a house-dweller! Sand-daisy! Bid me give myself to a vile Arab! Idle, lying, lazy wretches! I spit when I pass them. I hate my father because he goes with them and sits with them in their houses and drinking places, and follows their ways. He was a true man of tents aforetime, yet now he herds with them. He sits at the café and casino, and plays draughts—even with Omar Mefsaud—and suffers that vile vine-grower to beat him, because Mefsaud is very rich and likes better to win than lose."

"Why do you hate the Arabs?"

"Because I am a Kabyle. A dog hates a cat, because he is a dog. And the Arabs hate us; and they have always hated us and always will hate us."

"Then you must marry a wanderer, Sand-daisy—one of your people whose life is spent in the great waste—a man of tents and camels—a nomad Kabyle, whose dwelling is the desert."

"It is so. It is written. I know very well the manner of man that he will be. Yes, a man of swift horses and of camels—a fierce, strong man and a robber."

"A robber!"

She stared that I should be surprised.

"Is not the world quite full of robbers? Are there any other sort of men?"

"Of course."

"Are not you a robber?"

"No, indeed."

She pointed to the earth where a raw red blot showed whence I had dug the root of a cyclamen.

"Your steel there," she said, pointing to my trowel, "is red with the blood of the earth. You have just torn a little child out of her flesh."

"Then I'm robber and murderer

both; for I cannot guess how many or how few of these things will grow when they get to Engiand."

"The Touaregs are splendid robbers; Frenchmen call them 'the Pirates of the Desert.' You look round about and they are not to be seen; the sand is innocent of them. Then, as the vulture, herself invisible, yet finds the dead camel, so, from under the edge of the sand, they know the coming of the caravan. A cloud rolls against the sky and the merchant people think it is a sand-storm; but presently it glitters into steel points and flashes with crimson and yellow; and horses foam out of it suddenly; a flag flies; and there is a chant of music. The Touaregs come, like thunder, and they strip the fat people naked and so vanish again to their home under the brown tents behind the edge of the desert. Then their women make haste out to meet them with singing; and they slay a goat, and feast, and spread the silk and silver and gold upon the sand, and count the camels they have taken, and fill the children with dates until their little stomachs grow as round as baskets."

"That is the life you would live?"

"That is the life I shall live certainly. The man I love lives so, and he is without doubt a leader of men and a light among his people. A Touareg has ever been the greatest of robbers, and his name makes the house-folk tremble."

"Perhaps some day your husband will fall upon me while I am hunting for plants in the foothills of the mountains?"

She regarded me without emotion.

"If he does, he will take from you your little steel spade and your gold watch and all the things that have any value about you."

"But if I came and spoke to you, and reminded you of these days,

would you remember the francs I have given you for carrying my basket, and speak for me to the great man and ask him to give me back my little steel spade and watch?"

She shook her head.

"Not so. I should be all his wife—every bit of me. You are only strange dust blown over the sea out of another world. You are not desert dust. We cannot love you."

"Then I hope heartily that I shall never meet your husband, Sand-daisy."

"I hope you will; for then he will be the richer."

"You are indeed too frank to marry a 'man of houses.' But this Desert? You will soon grow weary of that."

"Do we weary of our flesh and blood? Do I weary of my own body, or tire to hear my heart doing its work in my breast? I am made of desert sand. I sprang from it, as the date palm springs. I am the Desert made alive—like the jerboa and the jackal and the golden-eyed, sand-colored snake. I know it; I feel my feet bathing in the sun-baked dust as I speak to you. The air of it is on my cheek and I understand. It makes me hot under my clothes, but it cools my face. I breathe it down, down into me. It is as good as the air of the Kabyle Mountains, or of the sea. Here there is no sweet air. Every breath has blown over flowers,



"A light among his people."

or fruit, or vile things. The orange orchard touches it, the acacia touches it, the dead dog touches it. They all share it with me. But there it only comes over sand as sweet as the live, deep sea.

"And the sun will rise out of that sand and sink into that sand again. We shall watch him from our tents, and he will watch us. He will rise in red gold and set in thin lines of purple stretched like ropes along the edge of the world. He will sink, like a blazing lantern, until the sand cuts him in half; then he will turn to a fragment, like a piece of orange; then he will dwindle into a spot; then he will be gone. And the heat will grow less in the evening wind, until I shiver a little and burrow into the sand, like a mouse, to get the warmth the sun left there when he was overhead.

"Starry nights I shall know and moonlight nights all alone, when the young men are away about their work and the old men whine together like ghosts around the fires. There is no silence like desert silence. But I shall hear howling of hyenas, or the cry of our babies that wake hungry. And seen afar off, the tents will cluster black, like a sleeping herd of beasts, on the moony sand. Then the slow day will creep up again and bring home the men."

"Perhaps not all."

"I have thought of that. But it is better to fight caravans than lions and panthers. My husband's saddle will never return empty to me. It is written."

"How comes it that the Desert is so clear to you—you who have never set eyes on it? Are there painted pictures in Algiers that you have seen?"

She answered that it was not so.

"I hate Algiers. I smell death in every street, and see death looking out of the eyes of the people, and feel death tickling my feet as I walk the paved ways. The francs that you have given me will go to pay boys and girls to do my father's errands there. He will think that I have gone thither, but I shall not go now for many days. The Desert pictures are here—here, deep down inside me. I shut my eyes and see them. I came out of Kabylia unborn, but I saw with my mother's eyes and drank in the things that I know with my mother's milk. Nothing will be new or strange to me when I go back. But everything will be lovelier and greater and better than my dream pictures."

"I do hope that Desert highwayman will come very soon, Sand-daisy," I said to her one day.

"I think he will. I am nice to look at now, and hard and plump and very strong. But the sun withers up women quicker than flowers. The Arabs hide their faces, and sometimes an old woman of thirty, who might be a grandmother, gets a husband, so I have heard; but we let the sky see our faces and all men may know how old we are. I only want a veil when I pass Omar Mef-saud—that pig who owns all these vineyards and the very ground our house stands upon. His eyes burn into me when I pass him by. There

he is now, watching his workers. He sees me and will come to look."

Presently the "pig," in shape of a very handsome middle-aged Arab, approached, and I perceived that it was the girl who led him towards us. He was clad in the usual white bur-nous, wore a rich under-garment, a green turban, and a waistband of silk. His mien spoke of high prosperity; opulence marked him and he bore the air of one accustomed to have his way in all things. He saluted Sand-daisy, but she paid no attention to him. Then the man turned to his workers and watched where two bullocks drew a wooden plough between the rows of the vines; while half a dozen ragged Arabs bent and hacked up the dense weeds with hoes; and a single tall figure swayed beneath the weight of a water-pot slung upon his back, and sweated along, lessening his load at every footstep, as he worked a little pump under his arm and sparsely fed each particular plant.

"What is amiss with Omar Mef-saud?" I asked. "He is a very handsome, very clean and very prosperous Arab. That is clear even to my foreign eyes. He can even water his grapes. It must be a most expensive matter to do that."

"He is rich with other men's money; he is a greater thief than any Touareg who ever stole a camel. His own people hate him. No good Arab will speak with him."

"And he is so rich?"

"He has quarreled with God."

"Is that all? Among Christian people a quarrel with God doesn't matter a button, so long as God doesn't take away the man's money."

"With the Arabs it is different. Their God is alive. Omar Mefsaud robbed the mosque! He was a good man once—long ago—before he

found out the value of grapes and the pleasure of great riches. He went to Mecca when he was poor, and they made him Oukil at the mosque; that is he who collects the offerings and treasures them for the poor faithful. Then he stole and stole, as they declare; and when the Mueddin cried, 'There is no God but God,' Omar Mefsaud, walking by, looked up and said in his heart, 'There is no God but francs.' They never proved that he had robbed the poor; but they knew it all the same, and they turned him away. Now he sells his wine to the French, and it goes across the sea and is drunk, not as the wine of this land, but as the wine of another that costs more money. These things my father whispers; and yet he will take this pig's hand, though his own countrymen look into the air or at the trees when Omar passes by."

"You don't like that particular sort of robber?"

"He has robbed God; and God will not forget."

"May he send forth merchandise and travel with it himself to the Touareg country?"

"They would strip him even to the gold in his teeth; but he hates the sand and the mountains, and the sun and the air. He loves to feel pavement under his feet, and to talk in the way with the great men of Algiers. He only comes thus far out of the city, because it is his money that will spring from these vine-stumps presently and flow into



"Twice as many francs as there are fruits upon my tree." See page 166

his treasury, as the juice of his red and white grapes flows over the sea to France. He loves the first room at feasts. He is the earliest to come and the last to leave eating and drinking. He loves the casino where women dance and sing; he loves the racing horses; but take him to Biskra and show him the racing camels—he would not love them. He has a harem and has paid away much gold for his women. He chooses them pale with large eyes, like me. He has no brown women. I wish very much that he would die, for he offends me. He is fit only for the company of Christians."

"He must be lonely if his people turn their backs upon him."

"Not so. The French make much of him and ask him to their houses. Some day, perhaps, he will turn into a Christian himself. Then he will rob their God, too."

And so we talked together; or more truly, the girl talked and I listened. Then, for some days, I lost sight of her, and being about to leave the country, sought her home that I might see her once more and bid her and her father farewell.

The air danced upon the noon that I climbed for the last time into the heights of Bouzaréah; and Sand-daisy's parent stood at his hovel door and saluted me as I approached.

"Where is your daughter, old man? To-morrow I sail over the sea, and I have come that I may look at this wondrous scene yet again, and that I may wish you and the maiden farewell. I have brought her a present, for she is a very good girl and I have grown fond of her."

"Monsieur is too gracious and too generous. But in very truth Allah remembers his servant in his old age. It has pleased Omar Mefsaud, the vine-grower, to look with favor on my Sand-daisy; and he has purchased her with many francs and has given me this house for my own forever. He has five wives, but three

begin fast to grow old, and my daughter has warmed his heart these many days. He is a very great man and minds nothing that we are Kabyle. He is so great that he can laugh at the laws and ordinances of his people. And he will wed her next week, and she will be the joy of his idle hours; and presently she will give over her tears, for she is a fool and loves him not. Yet, when she has seen the abode of his women, and the riches of looking-glass and pictures, carpets and furniture from France that fill it, she will surely dry her tears, and don silk and golden ornaments, and rejoice to do Omar's pleasure, and bless her old father when she rises up and when she sleeps."

He peeped at me out of his mean, inscrutable eyes; then he turned to an orange tree that stood beside the wall.

"Twice as many francs as there are fruits upon my tree. He has said it; and I have counted four hundred and twelve! To-morrow he will come and count."

I left my gift and went slowly down the hill. Above the Djurdjura was lifted that spear of the Lesser Atlas Mountains she had loved; and the snow upon it still rose upward like a golden cloud against the blue. Beyond—invisible, vast and burning—lay the desert of her dreams.



The Ascendency of Lafayette Sinks

BY BROUGHTON BRANDENBURG

He was possessed of twenty acres of land, a cow, a pig and an unenviable reputation. The land he had bought with back pension money; that was three years before he had migrated from the next county to the sparse township of Alexandria. The house was of logs, weatherboarded, and had two rooms and a lean-to. The cow and the pig kept him company and his reputation would have been lost sight of in a larger community.

It is to the reputation of Lafayette Sinks that this narrative pertains. He was never known as "Lafe"; there was something about the lank, silent, six-foot-two of his personality, the look in his hard gray eyes, and the set of his thin mouth, showing through the scattered red beard, which won him this very certain mark of rural distinction. His reputation had, however, been a cause for action during but the few months past, and those who damned him did it on one lone count. He had but one shortcoming in the eyes of the people of Alexandria, but that was intolerable.

They were of patriotic, pioneer stock, and at the outbreak of the Civil War, so intense was the local feeling that the fathers and sons of the village and contiguous farms enlisted almost to a man, recruiting an entire company of one of Indiana's regiments, famous afterwards for its valor, and, too, the same district later filled the gaps, the heart-breaking gaps that each battle made. So that altogether Captain Isaiah Briggs had commanded one hundred and twenty-four men from Alexandria township alone. Twenty-eight were now members of the

G. A. R. post, sixty-two lay in the Spring Church Cemetery, and the others were strewn between Shiloh and Savannah.

Into this life center, permeated with post-bellum feeling, where every old man was a veteran and every young man the proud son of a veteran, had come Lafayette Sinks wearing a "little brown button" and bearing a greasy discharge from the service of Lincoln, as well as a transfer from a post in another part of the state. This had all seemed very well and therefore Lafayette had made rapid strides in public favor. Then, too, he had the way of a leader about him and there were those who had come to think that Commander Ignatius Briggs, the brother of the redoubtable, late Captain Isaiah, had been the head of the post long enough. Lafayette Sinks would look well with the double-barred badge and the gilt belt, said those of such mind.

In one fell hour the commander incumbent and Lafayette had been pitted against each other and each was supported by a faction. Furthermore, a change of national administration having just occurred and the postmastership of Alexandria being spoils, both men became aspirants for the slender honor and still more slender salary. The vicinity vibrated with unwonted enthusiasm. Soon the two factions of the post took to meeting on different nights; it was anticipated the state department G. A. R. would interfere, and there was a social crisis imminent. Lafayette's cause gained steadily and surely.

For a short time things went along in this slow *crescendo* until one day

a packet of letters came by mail to Ignatius Briggs. It came to the commander as Havelock came to Lucknow. His little blue eyes snapped and his bushy white beard stood out aggressively as he hurried along from Ripener's store and post-office to the lumber-yard and sawmill of Warburton Brothers, his chief aides.

The three conspirators were short, squat men, the brothers' faces were smooth and round. Jim Warburton had lost an arm in the service and so kept the office; Dave Warburton wore ragged blue jumpers and ran the mill.

"Hye, Jim, fine spring weather," said Briggs with a glad note in his voice, as he paused in the doorway of the office.

"Hello, Cap, I wuz jest thinkin' 'bout yu when I seen yu comin' down the street," replied Brother Jim.

"Thet so?" and the commander looked up to find the millman's eyes watching the obtruded packet of papers, so he went on with a pretense of calm, "It sorta looks as ef I got my man up a hick'ry, Jim. Wha'd'ye think? *He is an old deserter.* An' here's papers to prove it."

Jim Warburton had been sitting on a high stool leaning on the stump of his arm in its pinned-up sleeve, on the desk top. He half slid to the floor as he grasped the meaning of the news, then whirling to the door leading into the mill room shouted out into the noise of the raucous sound of the vicious saw in a knotty maple log.

"Hey, Dave—you Da-a-ave, comere!"

Dave came in covered with sawdust, boxwood rule in hand and features set to expectancy.

"Jes' lissen to what we've got here. Tell 'im, Ig."

The little commander lifted his shoulders and advanced one foot, settling his weight on the other in the approved manner of the Indiana rural attorney about to address his jury. Slowly he drew the paper from the long envelope, explaining as he did so.

"They wuz a feller at the Detroit encampment who tuld me Latayette Sinks looked like a man who was a deserter from his old company, but had got his discharge all the same by some underhanded work of some sort-er-other. I never said nuthin', till he got ta makin' trouble fer his betters, and then I writ to a man I knowed in his rigiment and, by juniper, here's the hull blame thing.

"One day while fightin' outside Atlanta—you know how cluss our lines got to the Johnnies them couple a days—Lafayette slipped over, and by ginger next day his regiment, bein' in another part of the line, saw him in a Johnnie's uniform an' in a charge captured him with a lot of others. Yes-sir-ee, run him in an' seen him, past all doubt of mistake. He was sent to the rear, but in the rumpus got out of sight an' wasn't hyeerd from any more till by-em-by, bein' in a Washington hospittel at the close of the war, he got an honorable discharge, the low-life-scoundrel—somehow. Now, hyere is letters provin' this, they're from three men in his own rigiment who seen him ketched an' knows. Now, what you got ta say ta *that*?"

The papers were laid out and gone over. They were proof conclusive, and the two or three post officers who were in the Sinks faction were sent for and asked to come to the Briggs house for a conference that night.

The conclave was supposed to be secret, but next day the news was all over the township. Sinks was one



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"Jes' lissen to what we've got here. Tell 'im, Ig."

of the first to hear it. A dozen people went out of their way to tell him immediately. He merely went on planting his onion bed and said nothing more than "Thet so? Well, I never!" or "Who'd a-thought it?"

When he was summoned before the post to answer to the charges preferred against him he did not go. His supporters had quickly dropped away, and at that very session Briggs was triumphantly reelected and Sinks unanimously expelled.

Not so to be moved, however, was the great government which controlled the appointment of the mastership of the posts. This matter was still in abeyance and, unfortunately for Briggs, the county politicians controlling the patronage had given Sinks their promise. Now his unpopularity made them sorry and letters began to find their way to the Congressman of the district telling him that perhaps after all Briggs was the man.

To the curious who came to him pretending friendship and sympathy Sinks would say briefly as he looked them through with his gray eyes, "I didn't fight two years to desert to the losin' side at sich a time, I didn't leave plenty to eat, for starvation. I was captured, put into the ranks at the point of a bay'nit an' I run away w'en I got back in our lines becuz I seen I wuz goin' t' be shot. Goin' north, I jined the Army of the Poto-mac an' my new colonel got my discharge papers straight for me when the war wuz over. The boys of the old Pennsylvanny regiment kin tell whether I acted like a deserter er not."

However, not a single man or woman in Alexandria believed him, and so it came about that the reputation of Lafayette Sinks was that of a man to be shunned. He was a de-

serter from the flag and his country's service, an offence that Alexandria could not condone or forget.

The weeks of April went by and the first half of May was finished. The post was making preparations for the Memorial Day celebration, the chief holiday of the community by reason of its constituency.

Lafayette's little farm was just on the edge of the town, and before he had been expelled from the post he had been accustomed to stroll down of evenings to Ripener's store. Now, necessity alone took him there, and whenever he came in everybody around the store stopped talking, coughed or smoked hard till he had made his few purchases and gone out.

One night, about a week before Memorial Day, he was in need of some small supplies and, also, was unutterably lonely, so he left the house and walked gravely down to Ripener's. There was a crowd around the stove, in which there was a fire, as the night was chilly. Dave Warburton, who was on the celebration committee, was relating their plans for the coming great day.

As Lafayette entered, some one slid a toe against the speaker's boot, and he stopped in the middle of a sentence. Hank Little, who was big, burly, a bully and something of a wag, broke the silence a moment later by saying, loud enough for Sinks to hear as he stood awaiting the busy merchant's convenience, "Wonder where our Johnny Reb is goin' to dekkarate."

Sinks' gray eyes turned to the group in a cold, steady glare. Before it the laugh which the quip had raised dwindled to a nervous titter. Near Lafayette, in front of the counter, was a keg with hickory axe handles standing in it. Drawing

one of these from the cluster, Lafayette took two great strides toward the group. His thin beard quivered on his chin.

"By Goshamighty, I kin tell you where ef you want ta know, Hank Little. Right hyere in this town, an' I am goin' to make dog feed of any limp-necked coffee-coolers who have got anythin' t' say why I shuddent. Also, I think this hyere meetin' of loafers an' old wimmen hez lasted long enuff. Now, yu can all go home! Yu understand!"

He had been moving as he spoke so as to put them between himself and the door. The dozen men and striplings, almost too astonished to comprehend, looked at each other in amazement and with a large portion of fright. There was a critical silence as the red-bearded giant waited for their answer. Then with two or three well-directed kicks right and left he knocked the boxes and kegs from beneath those who sat nearest. The unseated sprawled on the floor, and he towered over them with the axe handle aloft. The movement toward the door began instantly.

"Go on, gol blame ye, go on,

now, I tell ye," roared Sinks, and with threatening voice and cudgel he drove them into the street while Ripener looked on too aghast to speak.

Once outside, the loungers collected. Little began to bluster, and the others picked up courage.

"I guess I'll need this hyere axe

handle some more. Hyere's the money," said Sinks from the doorway, flipping a half dollar back to Ripener; then he gave his jeans a hitch and moved forward toward the threatening group. It scattered before him as he towered in relief in the light from the doorway. Only Little stood his ground, and without word or pause Sinks advanced and drove, his great bony fist straight into the bully's face, then stepping over the stunned length stretched in the



"The commander fumbled his program."

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street dust, he went on home.

Even the liberal-minded or the curious who had been wont to pull rein when passing Lafayette's place and he should happen to be coming to the end of the row nearest the fence at the roadway, never stopped to gossip now and rarely passed the outcast the time of day.

There are hours when a man must have speech even if it be but with dumb brutes. At such times it was Lafayette's habit to address himself to old Doll, the off member of the bay and white team, which he hired from a farmer farther down the valley, during the heavy working season. The old beast would lay her pert, pointed ears back and seem to listen most knowingly whenever he spoke. Lafayette fancied she disapproved when she flicked her tail in life-long habit, for the flies had not yet arrived. When she coincided in his mood or bent, thought Lafayette, she would lean farther into the collar till the harness creaked, and bob her head up and down as her huge shoulders worked under the rough brown coat. Once old Doll and Lafayette had agreed, even about such trifles as the choice of seed corn, nothing could change their determination.

Memorial Day fell on Monday, and on the preceding Thursday afternoon Lafayette broke the silence after lifting the right leaf of the harrow over a boulder near the back fence, which he had long since meant to blast out.

"A-doin' things fer spite 's an old game that hain't never paid—Gee-ee, Dan, Gee-e-e—as I knows of yet. It's sorta satusfyin', though. Whoa-haw—haw—uh! Gosh dang yer fool hide; git over there," and he brought the single line down with a crack on Dan's white rump. "I've got-ta keep up with the percession—I've got-ta do somp'n. I guess I kin stand the strain—that so, Doll, old girl?—stand the strain of half what I got witherin' up under a bilin' sun fer spite. Whoa, girl," and he turned the team, then swung the harrow around straight at the end of the row and began again as the teeth moved through the brown clods.

"A man kin do a lot ef he's got sand. Kain't recollect anybody sayin' meeny, meeny tekel yufarsin to me as yet on that subjc. Lordee! wouldn't they open their eyes ef I did it! he-he-he. It's amusin'. I'll do it ef yu say so, Doll," and the mare by way of answer bobbed her head up and down and strained the traces. The matter being settled, Lafayette relapsed into silence.

On Saturday he left Doll in the stall, and in the chill dawn washed the stable-stains off the albion-coated Dan, hitched him to the long shallow-bodied spring wagon, and drove into Alora, the county-seat as well as the nearest large town.

That night the crowd at Ripener's had a choice bit of news on which to speculate. Jerry Blakely had stopped at the store on his way home and told Ripener that he had been in the county recorder's office that afternoon when the lawyer of the Alora Loan and Security Company had filed a mortgage on Lafayette Sinks' place for four hundred dollars.

Conjecture was fruitless. No one knew of any use he could have at that season of the year for even twenty dollars in ready cash. The concluding remark in the matter was made by Ripener himself as he tied up a two-pound sack of prunes for Dal Hutchins.

"I tell you, boys, yer all wrong. He's smarter than the hull lot of ye. He ain't no fool. He's had ye all a-follerin' an old coon. All ye can do is to wait an' see w'at happens er w'at he does. I'm a-thinkin' he's goin' to Washin'ton to buy some congress'nul influence, but I may be wrong, I may be wrong."

Sunday morning the Memorial sermon was preached in the Spring Grove church by the lean and lathy but vehement Reverend Thomas

Unger and every living soul in the township was there, in and about the long, white frame sanctuary, set high up on its limestone foundation—everybody but Lafayette Sinks. The Hutchins boys, who had passed his house as they came, brought the news, which was duly retailed in church-door gossip, that Lafayette had been washing up harness in the sunshine at the back of the house. Not a few but thought of how the year before he had sat grim and erect in the aisle end of the front seat, he, as its tallest man, being the file leader of the post.

Monday morning dawned bright and clear. The post ceremonies were to be held in the church and an air of expectancy hung over the village and seemed to spread even to the low hills of the horizon. The bell rang solemnly at nine, and at ten would peal forth again as the throng poured into the unostentatious portal of stained pine. The little girls with stiffly starched white frocks, pink ribbons and wondrous head gears, such as are afflicted upon the young and innocent, stood under the maples at the side of the main street and gazed with wonder at the Sons of Veterans who had come down from their hall into the village street to drill. The usual corps of small boys swarmed on the flanks, thrilled and filled with the military spirit. What few men there were among the spectators in the street wore the steadfast blue of the Grand Army uniform. Soon the village band appeared in the street from some place of concealment, and played in front of the church with an energy worthy of a better purpose.

At ten o'clock the Post, the Camp and the Women's Relief Corps formed in the post hall and marched to the church. After they were

seated and the speakers had been escorted within, what was left at the back of the church might have been properly called the public school. There was hardly an adult in the village who was not a member of one of the three organizations.

Under the seats, in laps and in the aisle were many sorts of baskets filled with flowers—plain wall roses, pink buds, home-grown lilies, hyacinths, geraniums, hollyhocks and all the good honest sort that bloom on the sunny side of the farm house.

There was not a member of the post who had not heard the news that some one had brought, that Lafayette Sinks had been seen driving toward town about daylight.

Jim Warburton had said to Captain Ig, behind his hand, "Depression is the better part of vallur, I reckon he thought, Cap, and so's he got away to town ez quietly ez he could."

"Yaas, I didn' think there was anythin' but wind in his sayin' he was goin' to be here to-day," was the Commander's relieved reply, but to conceal his sense of satisfaction and accredit his perception he shook his head knowingly.

Lafayette was soon forgotten in the interest in the proceedings. First the school choir sang "The Vacant Chair." Then the regular orders of the post were read. The Reverend Thomas Unger invoked the blessing of the Almighty. After a tenor solo from a rawboned young man in a black cutaway and white lawn tie, who was home from Purdue for the occasion, being the town's one musical prodigy, the first speaker of the morning was introduced. He was the florid Major Rathilan P. Hulbert of Kokomo. For ten years he had been the principal Memorial Day orator at Alexandria. His half hour of excursion aloft with the eagle and the flag was the same they

had traversed before with him, and more interest centered in the tall, gray-haired man with the snowy white mustache and imperial, whom no one seemed to know.

There was patience and even some show of pleasure while the choir labored through "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground."

Then the Commander rose and fumbled his program while he said:

"Feller Citizens, Comrades and Friends:—We have with us to-day in the place of Cap'n Parkinson of Alora, his old friend, Colonel Edmundson of Nashville, Tennysee, who, though he fit on the other side, will speak to us. It is a affair of great subsequence and good fortune that he, having been with the Lost Cause as a supporter, should now desire to honor our dead as we honor our honorable foes who was his comrades. I intruduce Colonel Edmundson."

The Commander was always proud of that speech and often referred to it in after years.

The gray-haired Confederate colonel rose with dignity, and by reason of his stature seemed to tower in the pulpit. He paused till the murmur of interest had subsided and the hush was unbroken, then simply and in language unadorned began to speak of the days when the pall of war hung over the nation, and though the years had healed the open wounds, he said, still the scars of the conflict were more or less evident in half the homes of the land.

Now, however, a common interest in one nation and one flag made men of the blue and men of the gray brothers. Only in the breasts of the narrow-minded did there rankle any hatred or malice. Now, as never before, could each see the other's gallantry in the light of appreciation. There were heroes on both

sides, in fact the very air of freedom which the American-born babe first breathes seems to instill into it the indomitable spirit which has never failed to appear when American arms were arrayed against any foe.

Into the hearts of the folk of Alexandria, taught to hate the South, there began to creep a new feeling of tolerance, a new conception of charity as this noble man, who had led a Confederate regiment, stood before them and spoke in kindly word and tone of men of the Union blue whom they knew and honored. A deep hush of attention hung over the closely-packed sanctuary.

The speaker passed to a relation of deeds of heroism which he had seen on the part of Union men. And now a strange thing occurred. The last of the stories he told had a note so familiar in it that several of the members of the post exchanged glances, and Jim Warburton leaned over and whispered something to the Commander, who shook his head as if in disbelief and disapproval.

This is the story Colonel Edmundson related.

"One day, on a field where many Indiana men fell, I was an eye-witness of the incomparable bravery of an infantryman whose deeds I have never forgotten. He was a plain man, a private in an Indiana regiment, and every inch of his six-feet-two, a hero.

"It happened there was hand-to-hand fighting between the lines and we were driving his regiment before us. Suddenly the man beside him dropped, shot through the legs, and this big fellow stooped to pick him up, calling to other comrades to help him, but none heeded. The pause he had made let my men surge around him. Encumbered as he was, he clubbed his musket in one hand and beat them off, till one, in



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"The colonel faced the throng, which grew silent."

trying to bayonet him, thrust through the wounded man on his shoulder. Then dropping his burden he began fighting with both hands, hurling men right and left like wooden billets until numbers were too great for him, and he was overpowered and sent back. Admiration for his lion-like prowess had deterred the men from killing him at first. They were bent on his capture.

"That night I saw him in a squad of prisoners, and had him brought to my tent. We were sorely in need of recruits. I offered him a first sergeancy in a company just formed. That meant a speedy commission. He laughed at my offer. He was too good a man to send to prison, and I determined to keep him near me. I had him put into a uniform and personally attached to me until I could try him out. Give me five hundred such men and I will whip a brigade.

"The next day we were at close quarters, and though I had taken his parole he disappeared; I do not think he escaped. I believe he was recaptured."

His conclusion after this tale was eloquent, but there were several men on whose ears it fell unheeded. They were thinking of the other story Lafayette Sinks had told.

When the final effort of the choir ended the services, slowly the long procession formed for the march to the cemetery, the band toiling through a dirge with which every one was perfectly familiar, for had they not heard it rehearsed for weeks? It had floated out of the open windows of the post hall every Tuesday and Friday night since Easter.

In the graveyard the different sections of the procession formed a conglomerate around some newly-leaved maples in the center of the

plot, and heard the ordered service of the post gone through, the prayers read, the volleys fired and "taps" sounded.

The bearers of the flower baskets were about to pass around to each of the sixty-two flag-marked graves, when a small boy on the outskirts of the crowd shouted:

"Ay-yi, here comes Lafayette Sinks!"

The effect was electrical. The superficial solemnity of the occasion disappeared. A hoarse murmur arose on every hand and there was a rush to get a view of the road.

Driving rapidly up the pike, where it rose to the crest of the hill on which were the burying grounds, came Lafayette's outfit. Dan, in his shining harness, was attached to the spring wagon, the long body of which was filled with a mass of gorgeous flowers. Drawn up to his full height, and braced against the dashboard, stood Lafayette. At a brisk trot they drew near, swung through the gate, up the graveled roadway, and straight into the center of the crowd, which parted in amazement and closed again around the outfit in wonder.

On the horse blanket, cushioning the seat, lay a Winchester rifle and two big blue Colts.

"Whoa, Dan," said Lafayette to the horse, and then to the astounded open-mouthed assemblage, as he picked up the rifle and laid it ready in the hollow of his arm, he spoke:

"Feller Citizens: Yure humble servint, bein' desirous of obsarvin' Decoration Day, and bein' compelled by sarcumstances he kain't help to do it his own way, is also compelled to ast your assistance in some of the triflin' details of his decoratin'. Will the decoratin' committee kindly come forward an' hand round to the graves of our buried comrades these sixty-two baskets of

the finest foreign hot-house blossoms that wuz to be bought in Alora? Jim Warburton, you bein' cheerman, I guess you had better lead the way."

There was a critical pause of a second or two that seemed minutes.

"Come on, I tell you!" drawled Lafayette in the hard, cold voice Jim had heard that night at Ripener's store, and Jim came to the wagon. At his first step the others of the committee also moved forward.

Then a hushed babble broke out, but the crisis was past, the chance of resistance was lost, and the baskets were rapidly added to the flowers for the graves, while Lafayette, standing aloft on the seat of his wagon, surveyed the faces upturned to him as if by fascination, for any signs of rebellion.

It happened that when Lafayette was first sighted, the throng had deserted the immediate scene of the ceremonies and rushed to get a better view of the approaching surprise. Colonel Edmundson and one or two others had been thus left standing apart. They did not at first comprehend the meaning of all they saw and heard. At the sight of Lafayette's grim countenance Edmundson had started forward, with strange emotions coming and going in his fine face. He had drawn back in self-restraint, and stood trembling as he listened to Lafayette's brief speech and watched the obedience to his commands. His time to act had now come, and leaving his place he elbowed his way through the crowd till he caught the general attention, when the people made way for him.

Lafayette saw the movement of the crowd. Then he saw the old colonel's face, and dropped his guard a moment's space in his own

surprise. Shifting his rifle, he held down his great horny right hand to the colonel, who was upholding both of his. They shook like brothers, and the colonel evidencing a desire to ascend the wagon, Lafayette swung him up to the top of the wheel, and next to the seat.

The colonel bared his head and faced the throng, which grew silent. The pause was tense. Tears were running down the old man's face. Lafayette himself was in a state of perturbation, strangely in contrast to his cool demeanor of a moment before.

"Good people," the colonel's voice trembled, but cleared as he went on, "there have been strange things for your eyes this day, but what you now see is the strangest of all. I had heard this morning of a man reviled among you. I believe him to be this man here beside me. In the sacred pulpit of your sanctuary I told you an hour ago of the deeds of a man of Indiana. Here I behold him. You have chosen to stigmatize as a deserter a man who was ready to give up his life for a wounded comrade, who fought like a demon against a score of foes, and who refused the strongest of temptations to forswear his cause. I thank God that I was sent here to-day. I do not know what to say. My heart overflows. Let us sing—sing our joy over a wrong righted and a deed of sacrifice done."

The old man began to sing "America." His emotion had been contagious, and the chorus swelled despite the whilom enmity and prejudice in the hearts of most of those present. Soon all were singing, and in western camp-meeting fashion filing by and shaking hands with Lafayette, whose slow tears crept down his browned cheeks.

In Pursuit of the Princess

BY IZOLA L. FORRESTER

"Is she young?"

"Twenty." Ellison referred to the letter on the table. "Tillinghast says tall, slight, hair a little on the red, eyes dark. Has no accent. Companion, the Countess Arnheim, lady-in-waiting to late princess, now, confidential friend and general chaperon to her serene highness, the Princess Yolanda. Vivacious, brunette, inclined to stoutness, about forty, American by birth."

"That's right," said I. "Tilly met her personally at Moritz, at one of the court balls or something, about a month ago. When he sent in his dispatches, he wrote me that he got all the inside facts concerning the revolutionists from the Countess Arnheim, and, incidentally, that she was a humdinger."

"A what?"

"Tilly's way of putting it. Gracious, delightful, etc. He also mentioned that the Princess was inaccessible."

"I should think she would have been," said Ellison, "to Tillinghast."

"He's a good correspondent," I said, with vague, well-intentioned discrimination.

"On revolutions, and trade reports," answered Ellison, replacing the letter in a Russia leather note book. "But you will notice that when it comes down to a fine point, requiring diplomacy and acute detective instinct combined with general address and tone, the old man overlooks Tillinghast, and cables one B. Ellison."

I tipped back my chair against the wall, and smiled at him.

"It's simply nerve," I mused. "Self-esteem abnormally developed

becomes, in its last and worst stages, pure nerve, neck, cheek——"

"Shut up," said Ellison. "You distract me."

He laid his small, short-stemmed briarwood aside, and jerked into his coat. "They're going to catch the Cymric at Cherbourg. We can make it all right."

I rose wearily, and grumbled. The prospect of a midnight chase to Cherbourg from Vienna was not inviting.

"Anyhow, they're hers," I said irrelevantly. "She's got a right to run away with them if she wants to."

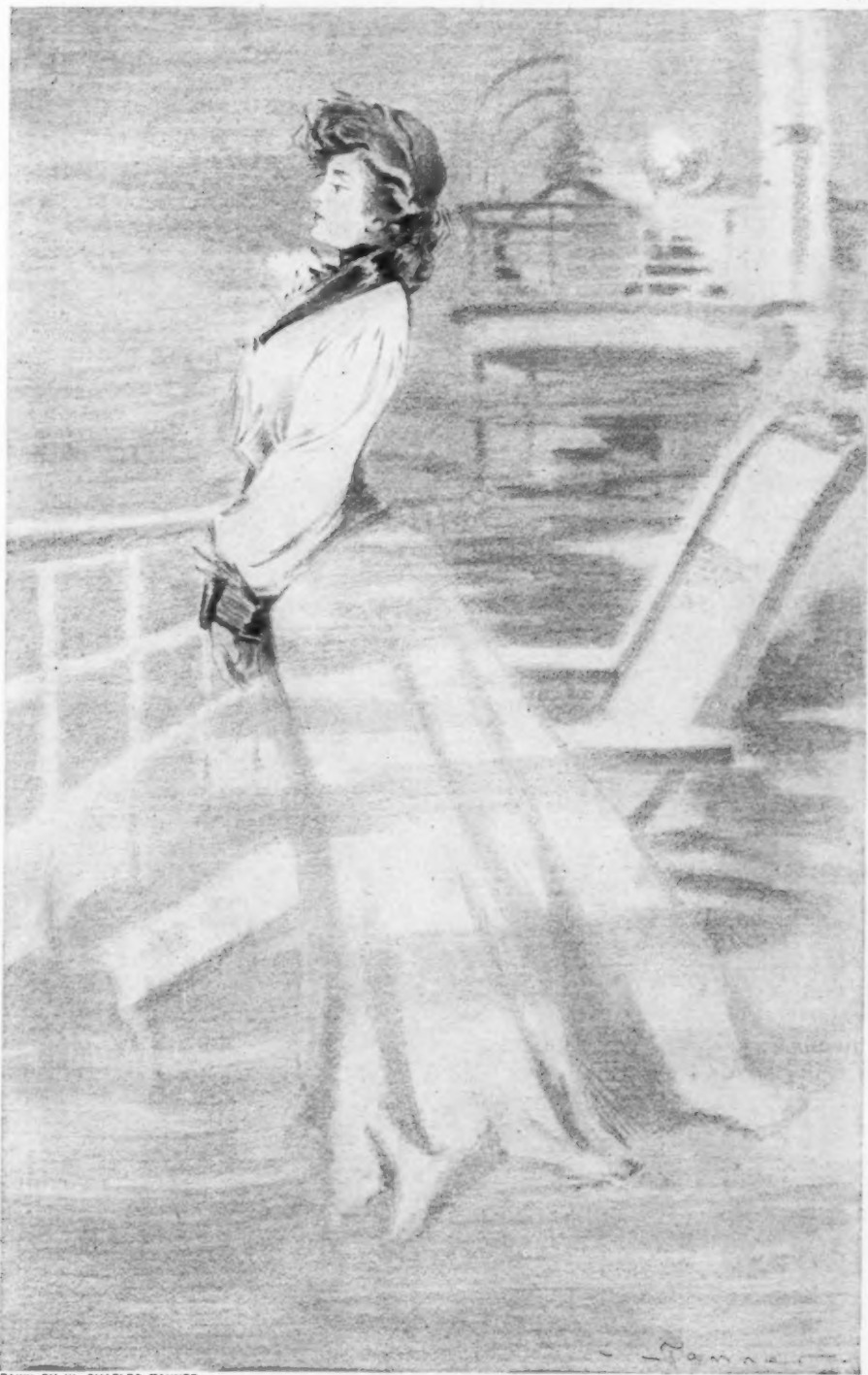
"Harpy," Ellison spoke kindly, albeit a trifle pityingly. "You are not up to the code of honor in royal circles. Those jewels represent collateral in the eyes of the reigning sovereign of Boravia. Said reigning sovereign, being on his last legs financially, needs collateral. The credit of the principality of Boravia internationally isn't worth a row of crooked pins. Pippolo couldn't raise a thousand dollars to-morrow in all Europe if he tried. Understand? Those jewels are worth three hundred thousand."

"Get out!"

"But they are. Tillinghast knows. Part of them belonged to Yolanda's mother before she was married to Deodor, and the rest were bought with her money afterwards. They were merely nominally the crown jewels because she was princess, but they never could be called crown property."

"Then what is Pippolo's claim?"

Ellison was throwing his things into a steamer trunk and suit case with the haste and dexterity that bespoke long practice and familiarity



DRAWN BY W. CHARLES TANNER

"There was not the slightest doubt of its being the Princess." See page 182

with quick transcontinental jumps. He tossed a pair of slippers after a navy blue sweater, and sat down on top of the table to light up the short pipe, and incidentally enlighten me on the fateful misadventures of the Boravian dynasty.

"Pippolo doesn't amount to anything diplomatically. He's only a kid, about twenty-four. Used to be a little tramp prince all the way from Vienna to Chicago. There was nothing doing in the line-of-succession game. Uncle Deodor was well and sassy, Cousin Yolanda sassier. Understand? Well, it happened that Uncle Deodor had done that same little tramp prince act in his younger days, and in the middle of his tramping had alighted on a heaven-kissing hill called Dodson's Peak. Dodson being a high flier in the copper market by virtue of said peak, little tramp prince woos and wins Dodson's one and only daughter, and also, as a side item, wins about a cool nine million, with more in sight when Dodson died. Understand? Well, it's the cool nine million that settled Boravia. Fixed it on a secure creditable basis among the nations. It's a measly, lone, ten mile by six territory, that South Dakota would shy at for an annex, but it's got a capital, and a castle, and a dynasty. Deodor was an important olive branch on the dynasty tree, and when some old boy, Prince somebody or other, turned his royal toes upward by assassination, the populace yelled for Deodor. Deodor, being blessed with a farseeing American wife, was on the spot, with nine million to back him up. And no one said him nay."

Ellison fondled the briarwood lovingly, and packed in a lump of fresh tobacco with tender persuasiveness of his thumb nail.

"Deodor died two months ago.

Yolanda was next by right to the throne, but Pippolo, little tramp prince, turns up and says no. Hasn't got nine million, but says he is son to the assassinated royal party whom Deodor succeeded. And, Harpy, old boy, that's what catches the merry villagers every time. They don't give a rap for the poor devil who is assassinated at the time. Any old prince can take his place, but look out. Next time it's the turn of the wheel, the public conscience longs for rest. Banquo's ghost is doing bloody political stunts, and they've got to lay him some way, so they grab the nearest of kin to deceased, and clap the crown on his head. So that's why Prince Pippolo is doing time as reigning sovereign of Boravia, while his little Cousin Yolanda is chasing back to the land of her forefathers with the crown jewels, and the remnant of the nine million. And a bully good full-page feature it will make in the old man's hands, written up in B. Ellison's felicitous and fetching style, and illustrated by the inimitable artist, Tony Harper."

"It's a wonder she doesn't marry Pippolo, and hang on to the whole business. She hasn't got the true feminine American spirit," I said.

"That's what Pippolo says—says publicly to press and people and privately to Yolanda. But Yolanda objects. She's an inaccessible demoiselle, according to Tillinghast; but wait." He winked solemnly. "I never saw a girl yet who wouldn't loosen up the ropes a little the fourth day out. When it gets monotonous, any picturesque diversion is welcome."

"Picturesque diversion, one B. Ellison?"

"In love and journalism," said Ellison contentedly, "all's fair as



DRAWN BY W. CHARLES TANNER

“The Princess, seated in a secluded corner, and beside her was Ellison.”

See page 184

long as the old man's O. K. goes on the cheque."

We made the steamer at Cherbourg by twenty minutes. Ellison had wired for our room. It was a double outside one, aft of the reading-room. We took a look at the list of passengers the first thing. The Princess Yolanda and Countess Arnheim were not there.

"They're incog.," said Ellison in a burst of inspiration, and we went all over the list again. It was useless. With the best of intentions, no amount of detective astuteness could make red hair, or stout vivaciousness out of plain names, so we gave up the list and relied on observation.

The log of our voyage for three days was brief.

"Foggy. Nothing doing."

The fourth day I was laid out comfortably in the smoking-room indulging in a social game with a harmless congressman from Antioch, Ill., when Ellison came in hurriedly. He leaned over my shoulder, and whispered:

"Cut it short. She's on deck."

"Which one?"

"She," repeated Ellison, and added as a happy afterthought, "Idiot."

There are times when I don't like Ellison. He is excitable and abrupt. But I gave up my seat to an interested spectator, and followed him out on deck.

There was not the slightest doubt of its being the Princess. I'd have known her in a Brooklyn Bridge crush. She was standing near the gunwale, well up forward. The fog had not entirely lifted, and in its soft pearl haze her figure seemed taller and statelier. She wore a full-length gray steamer-cloak and small cap of the same goods, pinned closely to her mass of hair, red-brown as a ripe chestnut. Her fig-

ure was half turned from us, but we caught a glimpse of the clear-cut profile, the small, straight nose, lips full and richly curved, and an aggressive, undimpled chin, carried well up.

I took out a sketch pad stealthily, and began to block out her figure on it with quick strokes.

"That will do all right for the three-col. wash," I said. "I can show the face a little more. We've got the photos Tilly sent on. They'll make a good group around the wash. I'll make it a three-quarter page, and you can mortice two cols. each side, and run your stuff up to the photos. Pretty neat, eh?"

Ellison knocked the pad out of my hand. As he picked it up he tore out the page, and returned the pad.

"Don't," he said shortly. "It's an insult to her."

I stared, from the tall, unconscious figure in gray, to the face above me. Ellison is nearly a head taller than I am, which gives him an advantage not backed up by any moral qualities. But there was a new look in his eyes. I had seen a similar one there on a previous interesting occasion.

There was a girl at Budapest—a little chunky, blonde girl, all dimples and pink roses. Used to serve vanilla chocolate and funny little twisted coffee cakes to us where we breakfasted. If it hadn't been for me—

Ellison is not exactly impressionable, but he is always in a receptive mood for new ideals, so to speak. From the look in his eyes, the Princess was unquestionably a new ideal. Therefore, having an understanding heart, I made allowances, and held my peace.

At this moment Chance and Cupid joined hands for a joyous walk-around. Ellison, after one unappreciative glance at the really credit-

able sketch of Her Serene Highness, threw it overboard. Whereupon a heaven-sent, vagrant whiff of wind tossed it back, and it fluttered down on deck at the very feet of the Princess. Ellison made a dash for it, but it was already captured. Her Serenity, as soon as she saw it, and heard his exclamation of dismay, promptly turned, and with presence of mind simply adorable, put her

The fog obscured my view as to details. And she also told him most simply and graciously that it was nothing at all.

That day we met them on the way to dinner. Ellison dared to seek her eyes, and she bowed ever so slightly. But it was enough. Her companion, the stout, brunette countess, favored us with a long, well-bred, good-humored stare of inquiry through her



DRAWN BY W. CHARLES TANNER

"One's point of view is limited on an ocean steamer." See page 184

small royal foot down on the slip of paper, and saved any further wandering.

Ellison thanked her with an earnestness and eloquence that were delightful—to a discerning spectator. But Her Serenity had raised the paper, and the sketch caught her eye as she handed it back to Ellison. Then she blushed. At least, Ellison assured me afterward that she did.

pince nez, and spoke to the Princess in an undertone, but Her Serenity never looked our way again, and Ellison was dogged and uncomfortable.

The next morning, when I went up on deck, it was clear and sunny. As I started on my daily constitutional trot around the boat, I came suddenly on the Princess, seated in her chair in a secluded windless corner,

and beside her was Ellison. I was not totally amazed. I raised my cap and went on. It was the fifth day out. Evidently Her Serenity craved picturesque diversion the same as common persons, and had found it.

Ellison was blithe, but uncommunicative.

"Did you find out anything good?" I asked casually.

"I found out nothing, except her name. She is passing as Miss Beatrice Kane, and her companion is her aunt, Mrs. Delorme Kane, of New York."

"Ah," I smiled knowingly, and admiringly. "They're all right on the incog. trick, aren't they? Shall we let on we're next?"

"Harpy," said Ellison irritably, "drop the vernacular, will you? I don't like it when we're speaking of her. It jars."

"Well, shall we divulge our divination of the identity of the persons in question?" It is always best to humor Ellison. It saves time, mental strain and sometimes money.

"No, we won't. If we do, she will at once suspect who we are on account of that sketch."

"Wonder where they've planted the jewels."

"It's her own affair," said Ellison coldly.

"And ours," I added. "As glittering, honored members of the press."

"Press be blasted," said Ellison. "Let's be gentlemen again, be it ever so painful."

I made no argument. Privately, I secured several excellent pencil studies of Her Serenity, also of the stout Countess, and laid them away against the time appointed. One's point of view is necessarily limited on an ocean steamer. It undergoes a rapid transformation as soon as one hits the sod. I still had hopes

of Ellison if I could only get him on shore, and in the elevator going up to the old man's den. But I reckoned without the Princess. She frankly, graciously liked and approved of Ellison, and welcomed his society. I was presented in due time to both her and the Countess, but remained a cipher.

The night before we passed Sandy Hook they remained on deck late. The Countess was six feet away, but fast asleep in the cosy folds of her rug. There was a gem of a moon, doing a hurdle race with a lot of silver-edged black clouds, distorted, straggling shapes like a flock of Walpurgis witches. From where I stood I could see the face of the Princess, as she bent forward, her chin on one palm, watching the long, dark swells of moonlit water. It was a lovely face. I did not blame Ellison.

They were not talking, which is an ominous sign. When a man and a woman understand each other so perfectly that words are unnecessary, a climax is imminent.

We passed Sandy Hook shortly after daybreak, and the blessed shores of Staten and Long Island closed out the vastness of the sea. Ellison was past all throes of patriotism. Even when our lady of Liberty loomed up in sun-kissed splendor out of the wreaths of violet haze, he turned his back on the harbor, and looked in the eyes of Yolanda.

All at once I felt a light touch on my arm, and turned to encounter the merry, quizzical gaze of the Countess. She spoke in French, which I can manage to ramble in as a camel in a rose garden.

"M'sieur Harper, we, you and I, we have been witnesses of a pretty comedy en voyage, *n'est-ce pas?*"

"Or a tragedy." I felt bound to

stand by Ellison, and his feelings in the matter.

She smiled negatively.

"Your friend is a bold wooer."

"He has good cause."

She spoke with sudden directness.

"What is it he has done?"

"Done?"

"Yes. You are his friend. I have known and loved her since she was a child. In confidence, I may say, well, that he is not disliked." She glanced up at me with bewitching archness. "He has told her that he loves her—in spite of the obstacle; that he would ask her to be his wife, if it were not for the obstacle. What obstacle? What has he done?"

"But, madame," I exclaimed. "It isn't he at all. The obstacle is on her side, of course."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"The money? Pouf! Of what use is wealth to a woman if she may not marry the man she loves? If that is all——"

Ellison and the Princess came slowly towards us. Their faces were sad. The Princess was pale.

"We go to the Hotel Savoy for a few days, and then home," the Countess spoke with meaning, and friendliness. "At four to-morrow you and M'sieur Ellison may call if you desire."

I did not tell Ellison. He had blundered, not knowing that in the hearts of royal maidens, as well as pretty rosy waitresses, love is king of all. We went direct to Ellison's apartment. He was weary-eyed and bitter.

"What will you tell the old man?" I asked.

"I shall tell him that rather than expose one item of the Princess Yolanda's private affairs, I shall be happy to tender my resignation as a member of his staff."

It was a splendid saying. All it needed was the ripple of applause from the gallery, and the tremolo of the violins to make it heroic. I didn't applaud. I shook hands with him. The telephone bell buzzed, and he answered it. All that I caught was his gasp.

"What? Say it again."

He came back from the hall looking five years younger.

"Harpy, that's the old man himself. Says he's sorry we made the trip, but it's not our fault. We couldn't know. Suggests that we go back by return steamer. Tillinghast has cabled that at Paris the Princess Yolanda changed her mind, and returned to Boravia with the Countess and the jewels, and was married to her cousin, Prince Pippolo, three days ago. Tilly has sent in a full account of the wedding."

I did a foolish thing. I laughed. Ellison did not. He tramped the floor three times, took a look at himself in the pier glass and started for his coat and hat.

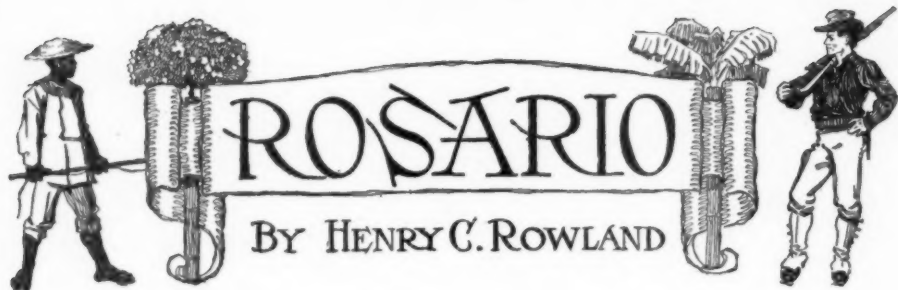
"I don't know when I'll be back," he said. "But I'm going to find her if I have to go to 'Frisco. Tell the old man what you please."

I laid firm, fraternal hands on his shoulders.

"Bertrand Ellison," I spoke kindly, for he was laboring under undue excitement. "We will call to-morrow at four o'clock, by special invitation, upon Mrs. Delorme Kane, and her niece Miss Beatrice Kane, at the Hotel Savoy, and I would suggest that you improve the opportunity by explaining away the obstacle."

Ellison looked at me steadily, but in the steadiness there was a certain sheepishness, as of one caught in a tangle of much folly.

"I think I will go now," he said.



Little Rosario was radiantly happy, for the night before Emilio had told her that at last through industry and economy he had saved up a sufficient number of pesos to buy an interest in his brother's shop in the Calle San Pedro. This meant that the sooner they went to the Padre and got married the more pleasing it would be in the eyes of the blessed Virgin.

Rosario's father was a short, squat Tagal who owned three of the *cascoes* that carry freight to and from the little coasting vessels that run between Manila and the different ports of the Archipelago. Her home was in the after end of the largest *casco*, and there, for several years, she had lived happily with the five other members of her family.

Rosario's lover, Emilio, was a young Macabebe about sixteen years of age, who owned a caribao and cart with which he did such trucking as fell in his way. After his day's work was done he would often come down to the canal, just above the *Capitan del Puertos* where the *casco* was moored for the night, and he and the girl would squat on the basket-like roof of the cabin, smoke a cheroot together, and discuss their future. Since the American occupation, business had been very brisk. Emilio had sold his bull cart and bought a quilez with a *picinio caballo* to draw it, and from that time on had rapidly amassed wealth until finally he had saved one hundred pesos,

which was sufficient to buy him an interest in his brother's business of selling *piño* and *hoosi* cloth. He had taken no part in the insurrection, not being in sympathy with the Tagallos, and caring more for pretty little Rosario than for the cause of Aguinaldo.

One evening, as they were sitting together, watching the Chinese coolies carrying their cargo of loose hemp fibers into a warehouse, they saw a tall, thin American walking rapidly down the sea wall in their direction. He was chewing his moustache nervously and, with a light bamboo cane, pettishly striking the coolies that got in his way. When he reached them he stopped.

"To whom do these *cascoes* belong?" he asked in bad Spanish.

"To my father, señor," replied Rosario.

"Where is he?"

"He is here, señor; do you wish to see him?"

"Yes; go and get him; hurry up."

"Immediately, señor."

Rosario turned to her father, who was bathing the children in the river on the other side of the *casco*, but he had heard the conversation and came over to them.

"Do you own these *cascoes*?" asked the American.

"Yes, señor."

"Well then, come with me."

Manuel hesitated. The American was not in uniform, but wore the

customary European civilian costume of white linen and pith helmet.

"Come along, hurry up. The depot quartermaster wants to see you."

"Yes, señor," replied Manuel, and followed him away. In half an hour he returned.

"We are to go out to-morrow to the big American soldier ship that arrived to-day, and help to land the troops," he said.

"Bueno," replied his son. "Perhaps one of the Americanos will give me a soldier hat. They are very fine, those hats of the Americanos."

"Yes, and sometimes they give one canned food which is very good. At any rate I am to receive four times the usual price."

"But how much will you be obliged to return to the señor quartermaster?"

"That I do not know. I asked a large price purposely, but when I asked the señor what *cumshaw* he was to receive, he simply laughed and said that he was not a Spaniard. They are very strange, these Americanos."

The next morning Rosario arose early, bathed and dressed her hair more carefully than usual, anointing it with cocoanut oil, and combing it out until it fell below her waist in great black lustrous waves. Her *panueta*, a gift from Emilio, was brand new, and her *pino* blouse dropped coquettishly over one shoulder, revealing a delicate little

rounded neck and the graceful upper outlines of her bosom. For some of these Americanos were very attractive. She secretly admired the yellow hair and pale eyes that many of her countrymen found so startling, and she had learned that men of all nations were very much alike where



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"In America we say goodbye, so!"

See page 188

a pretty woman was concerned.

The quartermaster's launch towed them out alongside, and the work of disembarking was soon begun. Manuel's occupation was simply the navigation of his craft, so he squatted on his heels and watched the soldiers apathetically. Rosario found her-

self unable to support the gaze of so many strange and curious eyes, and retired to the cabin, where she peeped out between the lattice-work at the strange Americanos. There was one in particular who interested her especially. He was very young and very fair, with a fine athletic figure, and a frank, boyish face. Evidently he was a non-commissioned officer, for he had two V-shaped stripes of white tape sewed upon the sleeve of his flannel shirt, and seemed to be directing the other men where to stow their effects. Her brother seemed also drawn to him, for after they had started Pablo approached him diffidently, and with a most insinuating smile pointed first to his campaign hat and then to himself. The yellow-haired American laughed. "*Quiere sombrero?*" he said good naturedly.

"*Si señor—no hay sombrero,*" replied Pablo. The American dived down into his kit and shortly produced a battered-looking felt hat.

"*Aquí,*" he said, handing it to Pablo.

"*Uh! Muchas gracias Señor Capitán,*" replied the delighted boy.

The soldier laughed, then he happened to notice Rosario, who had timidly approached.

"*Buenos dias, cara mia,*" he said with a flashing smile.

"*Buenos dias, señor,*" replied Rosario musically. She thought that she had never seen so beautiful a man.

The corporal held out his hand with an engaging smile. Rosario hesitated a moment, and then her own little brown one fluttered into it. What a strong, big, firm hand he had! He pressed hers slightly, and she would have blushed if she had not been such a brown little maiden.

The soldier chatted with her in broken Spanish until they reached

the dock. Rosario soon forgot her bashfulness and laughed merrily at his questions as they went up the river. These Americanos, how little they knew after all! He had just asked her if the green lettuce-like looking water-plants floating down the river were good to eat.

Before he left the casco he dived again into his blanket-bag and produced a little box of commissary candies, which he gave to her. Rosario thought they were the most delicious things she had ever tasted. She wondered why such a handsome American soldier should be so kind to a little Filipino casco girl. At last they touched the dock. The corporal jumped to his feet. Rosario rose also and held out her hand.

"Goo-by-a," she said, as the soldiers along the dock had taught her.

The corporal laughed.

"You little darling," he said in English. "Good-bye. In America we say good-bye so——"

Before she understood he threw one big arm lightly about her shoulders, drew her to him, and kissed her on the lips. Then he leaped up onto the gunwale. The men about him who had seen the performance laughed and cheered. Even the "*señor teniente*" was laughing.

"Come, corporal, no annexation without taxation," he said.

"Quickest way to end the war, sir," replied the corporal. "Come, boys, tumble out, pass out that junk. *Pronto!*"

Rosario looked up at him wistfully. Some of these American customs were very nice. And then her heart gave a great throb. For there, sitting on the box of his *quilez*, his face like a demon, sat Emilio. He, too, was watching the fair-haired corporal, but with quite a different expression. One of the American



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"You will be sorry after I am gone." See page 190

officers was just entering the *quilez*.
"Palazzo—Pronto—sigi—sigi," he said to Emilio.

The *quilez* rattled off, Emilio casting another venomous glance at the corporal. The soldiers had gotten ashore and were buckling on their equipments.

"Fall in!" The men shuffled into place.

"Tenshun! Right dress—front. Count fours."

The customary unmusical vocalism rippled down the line.

"Fours right march—halt. Forward—column left, march!"

The company swung down the street and Rosario watched the broad-shouldered corporal as long as he was in sight. The column swung around the corner and disappeared. She sighed and went about preparing the customary dinner of fish and rice.

That evening Emilio came down to the canal as usual. He was rather taciturn at first, but finally relaxed and became better natured.

"I saw the pig of an Americano take you in his arms," he said to Rosario. "The caribao!" (the most insulting epithet a Filipino can use). "Had he remained much longer my knife would have found its way to his heart."

"He meant no ill," protested Rosario. "He was a very kind señor and gave Pablo a soldier hat, and to me these sweetmeats. See, *caro mio*, I have saved some for you." She handed him the box.

"Uh!" he said, "I should like to throw them in his face, but since he is not here I will throw them in the river." He suited the action to the word.

"And if he was here, he would throw you in after them. You are bad, and I hate you," cried Rosario.

"Forgive me, *Carissima*," said

Emilio, "but you are so dear to me that I cannot bear to think of another giving you presents. See, I have brought you a *pino* handkerchief embroidered by the little sisters in the convent."

"I will not take it. I do not love you, go away," pouted Rosario.

"*Bueno*, I will go away then. You will be sorry after I am gone and when I come again will be glad to see me. *Adios*."

Emilio went, but Rosario did not even look after him. How black and thin he looked after the handsome Americano! She wondered where the company had gone. Finally it occurred to her to ask the native policeman, which she did. He did not know, but said that he would find out. And the next morning he told her that they were either in the walled city, or at Malate—just beyond the Luneta.

The next day there was nothing to do, and so Rosario thought she would go over to the walled city and see a friend. Her brother paddled her across the river in their little dug-out, and she went up to the gate just beyond the Magellan monument. As she passed under the arch, with downcast eyes—for it always frightened her to go by these big, fierce, hairy-faced men in khaki—one of the soldiers remarked to another:

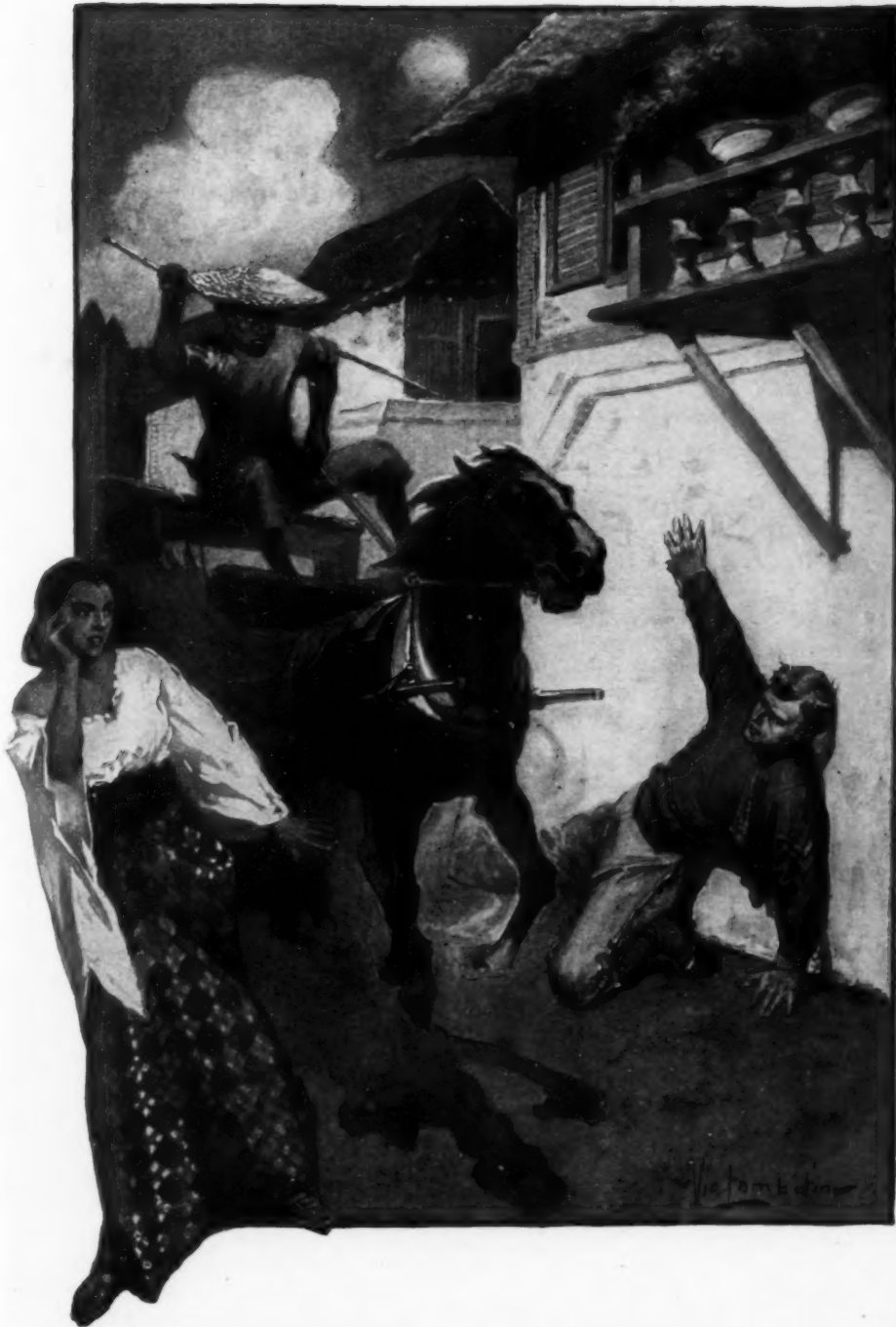
"Looks like your girl, Jack—the casco lady."

"By George, it is," replied the other.

Rosario did not understand the words, but the voice was like an electric shock. She shot a swift glance upward. There stood the corporal.

"*Buenas dias, señorita*," he said in his fine big voice. It thrilled little Rosario through and through. How grand it was to be called *señorita*!

"*Buenas dias, señor*," she replied tremulously.



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"The shaft struck him a glancing blow." See page 192

He held out his hand, which she took doubtfully.

"Where are you going?" he asked. Rosario told him. He walked along with her for a short distance and asked her several questions about herself.

"May I come to see you sometime, señorita? I must go back now. But I will come down to the canal to-night."

Rosario's heart beat wildly.

"Oh, the señor is too good," she said. "I am only a poor girl and live on a casco. See my dress, how poor it is. And Emilio would be angry."

"Who is Emilio?"

"He is my lover," answered the girl simply.

"But so am I, señorita," said the corporal. "You are more beautiful than any woman I have seen in Manila. Already I love you madly. Do you think you could learn to love me?"

"Oh, señor, I do not know. Oh, *Madre de Dios*—take care!"

A *quilez* had swung around the corner, coming from the *Cuartel Santiago*. On the box was Emilio. Quick as a flash he had cut his little stallion savagely with his quirt. The corporal saw it just too late. The shaft struck him a glancing blow on the thigh, and threw him up against the wall of a building. He scrambled to his feet, and jumped around the corner. Emilio was making for the gate.

"Guard there. Hi there, stop that man!"

The guards jumped to their feet and barred the way. A long, lanky private grabbed the pony by the bridle. The corporal ran down to the gate.

"What's up, Jack?" asked one of the men.

"This nigger tried to run over me."

"Shall I run him in?"

"No, just let me get a hold of 'im." He grabbed Emilio by the scruff of the neck and dragged him off the seat.

"Now, blast you, what did you do that for?" he asked savagely.

"The señor was behind the corner, and I did not see him," replied Emilio; "I was in great haste, for a señor is waiting for me at the hotel. I have a message for him." He showed a note addressed to a captain. The corporal looked at him suspiciously. He tightened his grip and gave the man a vigorous cuff on either side of the head.

"That will teach you to be more careful in future," he said. "*Vamos!*"

Emilio drove away. The corporal went back to look for Rosario, but she had gone.

Emilio did not go down to the canal that night, but the corporal did. And the next and the next, until he was warned by the sentry at the dock that the officer of the guard was asking about him. After that Rosario would wait until dark, and then slip quietly into her canoe and paddle over to the walled city. The corporal did not say much about his conquest to his mates. Rosario no longer sang weird little songs in minor keys as she went about her work, or sat on the top of the cabin watching the sun go down behind Corregidor. Occasionally she saw Emilio as he drove past in his *quilez* going to the captain of the ports, but he refused to speak to her.

The corporal's company had left Manila, and gone out to Malate, where they were doing guard duty, and she was able to meet the soldier only two or three times during the week, and then generally in the day time. Once or twice when with him

she saw Emilio, but he gave no sign of recognition. Finally she ceased to see him, and on inquiring from one of his friends was told that he had joined the insurgent army.

One night Rosario waited for the corporal, but he did not come. Nor for ten days afterwards did she see him at all. Then one day as she was coming across the *Puente General Blanco* she saw a familiar pair of broad shoulders in front of her under a head of golden hair. Her heart gave a great bound and she hurried to overtake him. On the other side of the bridge he turned into one of the shops kept by the little *Mestiza* girls. When Rosario got there she saw him sitting on the counter chatting with the pretty proprietress. Rosario looked at him appealingly.

"Ja-aak," she said.

He looked up with the old quick smile.

"Hello, Rosy," he said in English, and resumed his conversation with the *Mestiza*. Then seeing that she still remained he added lightly with a wave of the hand:

"Run along home, little girl, this is my busy day."

Rosario did not understand the words, but the gesture was unmistakable. She walked slowly away, not home, but to the street that runs up at right angles to *Calle Sta. Theresa*.

About a week later the corporal went out with a squad of men to

relieve the guard. As they were passing the wall that runs around the convent grounds, a native sprang suddenly from the lemon bushes and in a flash his *bolo* had shorn through the corporal's golden hair and deep into his handsome boyish face. In another bound the man had leaped the wall and disappeared. The thing had happened so suddenly and unexpectedly that not a shot was fired until the native was almost out of sight. Then, although the bullets must have whistled in very close proximity, none seemed to find its mark. A hue and cry was promptly raised, the neighborhood was carefully searched, several arrests were made, but nothing resulted therefrom.

The *bolo* was the ordinary native weapon and different in no respect from any other *bolo* except that on the handle, which was of caribao horn, was scratched the name "Emilio."

They carried the corporal to the hospital, but he was beyond the doctor's skill. He was a popular man in the company, and his comrades swore to remember his wanton murder the next time they went into action—and they did. The old first sergeant, affectionately known as "Pop," sized up the situation for all hands. He turned the *bolo* thoughtfully over in his horny paw.

"We won't have no peace in these islands," he said, "until we kill the hull dam' outfit—the sneakin', treacherous scoundrel!"

He meant Emilio.



A Man at Arms

By Owen Oliver



It was a bright June morning when my lady first spoke to me, leaning down a little from her tall gray mare.

"They tell me that you are ready with your sword, Master John Dare," she said.

"My sword is at your service, Madam," I answered.

She eyed me, with her finger pressing a dimple in her cheek. I had seen many fair ladies in my time, but none so fair as she.

"You have done great feats of arms," she said curiously, "according to Master Main." He was captain of her guards; and when I came home, broken in health and pocket, from the wars in France, he had offered me a company.

"What would you have of me, Madam?" I asked bluntly. It was not for me to speak of what I had done.

She looked me up and down again, and tossed back her floating hair. Long yellow hair it was, the color of ripe corn; and she had great blue eyes.

"I would have you slay a man." There was a sudden ring in her voice like the clash of steel.

"Madam," I told her, "it shall be done."

She laughed and held out her hand. I took it and gave my other hand for a foot-rest, and doffed my cap when I had helped her to alight. For she was a great lady, and I was only a poor soldier of fortune with some skill at arms.

"You were wise to ask his name," she said with another smile.

"It is all one to me, lady, if he has done you ill. Who is he?"

"The Baron of Greatlake." I raised my eyebrows.

"Truly, Madam, you set me no light task."

The Baron was three inches taller than I, and an inch more across the shoulders; and I am a large man. Also, he was cunning of fence and no man had stood before him yet.

"If you are afraid——?" She paused, watching my face; and I smiled.

"I am not wise enough for fear. What has he done that you would have him slain?"

"He seeks me in marriage," she said with a frown.

"I can scarce blame him for that," I told her. She looked at me somewhat kindly; for a lady is never too great for flattery.

"Nor I," she owned, "if it ended there; but since I refused him, he has sworn that no one else shall marry me. When Lord Vere did me the honor of asking my hand, he challenged him to combat and slew him; and when Lord Tracy came, he challenged him and slew him; and they said that Sir Richard de Grey was coming, but after the Baron spoke with him, he turned back." Her lip curled.

"I shall not turn back," I promised. "But I am no noble. It is not likely that the Baron will fight with me."

"He will fight with you, if you say that you are a suitor for my hand." I stared at her so, that I feared I must have seemed unmannerly.



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"She held out her hand and I kissed it." See page 196.

"I had scarce thought that I might fly so high."

Her cheek flushed pink.

"Neither had I, Master John Dare," she replied proudly, "but you have my permission to say so."

I shook my head.

"I do not take back my word. If your suitor I say I am, your suitor I am."

The pink of her cheek deepened to red.

"Bethink you," she said, "I am a lady of birth."

"I am a gentleman born," I told her, drawing myself up.

"I never doubted that." She bowed, and I bowed. "But you are a man-at-arms, and serve for a wage."

"You are a woman, fair lady," I told her, "and I am a man."

She shrugged her shoulders prettily.

"Be my suitor then—till you are refused."

"I will endure refusal to serve you; though, believe me, it is harder than to kill a man."

She took the blue silk scarf from her neck and tied it round my arm. The scarf is stained with my blood, but I have it yet.

"I think I have a very brave knight," she murmured softly.

"Nay," I said, "I am no knight; only a poor soldier of fortune, who fights for a wage."

"I will fill your great hands with gold," she offered, "if you slay him; and give you land enough to make you a knight." I shook my head.

"Gold and land will not buy a man's life."

"Then what will you have?"

"A kiss from your red lips, beautiful lady."

Her eyes flashed, and she drew herself up haughtily, but I looked at her, and my eyes were as bold as hers.

"A man's life is worth a woman's kiss," I said.

"A woman's kiss is worth naught if it is unwilling."

"Then I must serve you for no wage at all."

She fingered the scarf on my arm, and looked at it with her head on one side, and tied the bow a trifle closer.

"I might not be so unwilling," she told me under her breath, "Master John Dare."

She held out her hand, and I sank on one knee and kissed it; and after that, if she had bidden me to the gates of hell I had gone. I was like enough to go there anyway, for the Baron was a stout man, and heavy of hand.

The next day she sent a herald to him, saying that John Dare, suitor to the Lady of Mere, would meet him sword to sword, when and where he chose, and the strife between them should be to the death. I fumed and fretted while the messenger was gone, fearing that the Baron would refuse to demean himself by fighting with me. The next day but one his herald came back with ours.

"My lord takes scant courtesy from your hands, fair lady, that you should ask him to fight with your serving man," he told her boldly.

My lady threw her dainty head back in the air, and laid her white hand on my arm.

"The man who is good enough for me, is good enough for your master," she said. "Tell him that the bridal is next week, and I bid him to dance there."

"My master," said the herald, "dances with 1,500 men, and his ally, the Count of Langlay, with 1,200 more."

My mistress looked at me with doubt in her eyes, and I looked at Robert Main, and he shook his head.



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

“‘What ails my brave suitor?’ she asked smilingly. ‘Are you afraid?’”

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For we were scarce 500 strong, and the castle was built for peace, not war.

"Tell your master," I said, "that he is a coward who would win my lady with other strength than his own." But the herald turned from me to her.

"My master would win you with his own hand, if that is your will, and this is the message that he sends. Come to the Loom Pass at noon, the day after to-morrow, with what champion you will—lord or knight or serving man—and my lord will fight with him for you."

My lady looked at the herald, and she looked at me, and laid her hand on my arm; and her hand trembled a little.

"Does your master promise that, if he falls, there should be no feud between his and mine?"

"So he pledges his word."

"Then tell him I will come; and if he prevail he shall take me back with him if he wills."

The herald bowed, and would not stay even to eat and drink, but asked a fresh horse and rode away. My lady dismissed the others with a wave of the arm; and came and sat beside me, where I sat moodily with my chin on my hand.

"What ails my brave suitor?" she asked smilingly. "Are you afraid, John Dare?"

"Aye," I said. "I am afraid—for you. I had thought to stake only my own life."

"And I," she said gaily, "think to stake only mine. Look!"

She drew a tiny phial from her breast, and held it up to the light, with her elbow on my knee. It was an ill-colored yellow-green, but I knew not if it was the liquid or the glass.

"If you die," she said, "I die—I do not want to die, John."

It was the first time she had called me so, and my heart was like a great fire.

"There are harder things than death," I told her, "and if I live, the hardest is mine."

Then I rose and left her, and stood over the armorer while he ground my sword, and a spare one in case of need, and a little dagger that would pierce through a coat of mail, if you struck fairly in the joint at the throat; and I fared sparsely on diet that the leech gave me to keep my body from grossness and my eye clear.

The next morning but one I rose long before the light, and saddled my own horse, and saw to every buckle and strap. When I was ready my lady came out in a dress of white, with gold in the pleats. She wore a red rose at her throat, but she gave the rose to me. The leaves are dry, but I have it yet. We set out before the dawn, and the air was a little chill. So I took the cloak from my shoulders and wrapped it over hers.

"You will be cold," she said.

"Nay," I answered, "I am afire."

Presently the tops of the hills were touched with white light, and there was a faint rose pink in the sky beyond them; and the little birds began to sing in the trees, and the bees to hum in the air. My lady looked back at the gray tower of her castle, looming up in the dark, and sighed.

"I shall see the sun rise on it no more, John, if you die."

"Live or die," I told her, "I shall see it no more." For if I slew him, I had resolved to ride away.

"You love my service so little?" she said.

"I love you so much," I told her.

She sighed again, and rode on with downcast eyes.

Then the hill tops grew purple and crimson and gold, and the sun rose over them; and the larks floated up to meet it, trilling lustily in the air. We rode down into the valley among the swaying corn, and up the mountains and through the first pass, and down the hills into the further valley, among the grass and sweet wild flowers, and past the pastures full of sheep, and over the brook and through the woodland at the foot of Loom Hill. At last we sat down among the trees to rest my horse. We did not speak till we saw the Baron riding afar, with the sun glinting on his coat of mail; and truly he was a fine figure of a man. I rose quickly, lest I should be late in meeting him, but she caught me by the arm.

"If you should fall, John!" She fluttered like a frightened bird. "If you should fall!"

"Believe me, lady," I said, "I shall fight to the death."

"Oh!" she cried, "I would not have you die." And she clung to my arm.

"I shall not find it so easy to live without you, sweet lady; but for your sake I would live to-day. Also, I would win my wage before my death."

She threw back her yellow hair and held up her face.

"And I," she said, "would not die in debt."

It was on the tip of my tongue to say that I had not earned my wage yet, but my desire was too great.

"Of your bounty," I said, "pay me now—if it is your will."

She looked right in my face, and her eyes—but I have no words to write of her eyes. "But if it is not your will," I said, "I will ask for no wage, whether I live or die."

"Oh!" she cried, and a great wave of crimson swept over her face.

"Will you shame me, John?" She cast her eyes down. "It would be kinder to entreat me," she said.

I could not find words to ask; but I put my arm round her, and kissed her lips, and she kissed mine. She paid her debt fully, as a great and bounteous lady should; and her face was afire—and mine!

"Dear lady," I vowed, "I know now the best that life can give. May the love of you strengthen my arm."

Then we rode forward till we met the Baron on a little open space above the ravine and below the crest of the hill. He bowed low to my lady and saluted me courteously with his sword; which I had not expected, considering the difference in our degree.

"Is it your pleasure that we should fight afoot?" I asked. There was scarce room for a horse to run on the ledge where we stood.

"Aye," he said, "on foot, as man to man."

We dismounted and faced one another. My lady sat back on a corner of rock that jutted out above, and there was a great fear in her eyes. We saluted again, and he invited me to move a little further forward, lest the sun should catch me in the eyes.

"It is an honor to me to cross swords with you, My Lord," I said.

"Nay," he answered, "it is an honor to me to meet so brave a man."

Then we began, feeling one another's blades lightly at first, and playing harder as we warmed. I had met many good swordsmen in my time, but none so skilled as the Baron of Greatlake; and before a minute had passed I knew that nothing but good fortune could give me the victory. Twice he drove me nearly into the sunlight, and each time drew back and motioned me

into the shade. Thrice he drove home in my mail shirt, and I but twice on his. Thrice he dented my helmet with a great blow and I struck but once on his. Then we smote furiously and guarded less. My shirt began to give at the right shoulder, and a streak of blood trickled down to the blue scarf that my lady gave. Then he beat me down on one knee. I leapt at him with the dagger in my left hand, and smote at the joint in the throat. He reeled, but the point did not pierce through, and as I stepped back he dealt me a crashing blow on the helmet. I was dazed for a moment, and raised my sword blindly. Then I saw that his sword had snapped off near the hilt, and held my hand.

"You need another sword, My Lord," I said.

"I have no other," he answered, standing with his dagger like a cat ready to spring, if I gave him the chance; but he knew and I knew that I should not.

"I have a spare sword," I told him. "Favor me by using that."

"No!" cried my lady. "No! You have won your advantage."

I glanced at her and was minded to strike him down; but I remembered his courtesy.

"I will not win by advantage," I answered.

"It is the lady's fight," he said, "not yours. Since she wills me slain, the advantage is hers."

I looked at her again and I looked at him, as he stood there facing death, and the blood was trickling through his mail, for he had not gone untouched. And the thought came to me that a braver suitor would never seek her hand.

"Lady," I said, "the advantage is mine, if I die. You are a great lady, and the Baron is a great lord. If I

died, you were well in his hands. Let me give him the sword."

My lady laughed and held out the little green phial.

"Give him the sword," she said, "and die. I shall be as well in his hands as in any other's when I have drained this."

The Baron looked at her and he looked at me; and again he looked at her. Then he threw his dagger down the ravine. One could count twenty before hearing it fall below.

"For the love of heaven, strike," he said in a hoarse voice; but I sheathed my sword.

"I shall be seeking other service," I told him, "when I have seen my lady on her road. Permit me to offer my sword to you."

"Are you not her suitor?" he asked quickly; and I laughed without any mirth.

"Until I am refused," I said.

"You do not love her?" he cried in amaze.

"By heaven above," I vowed, "I do! But she is a great lady, and I a poor soldier."

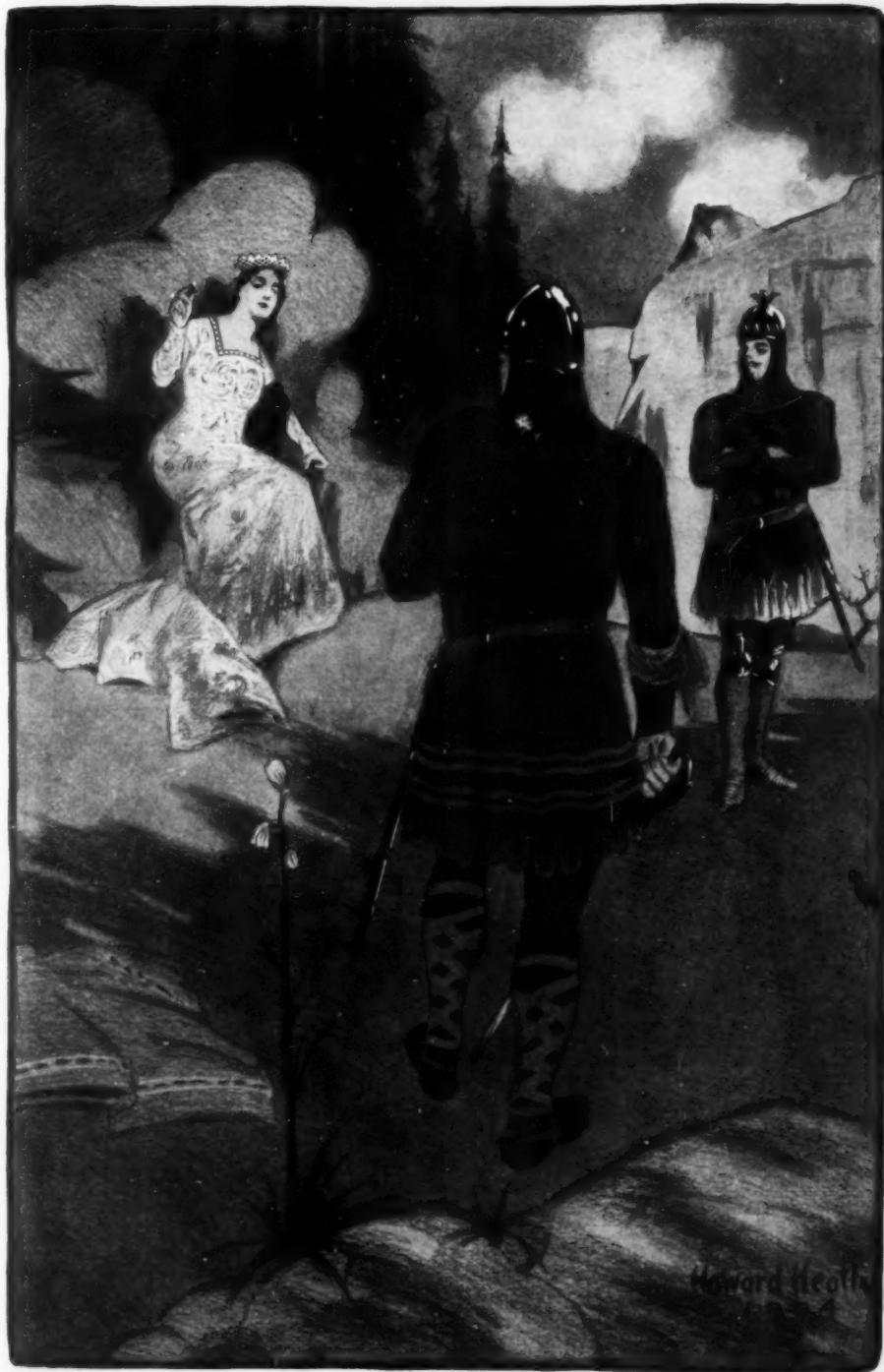
He drew a deep breath, then he sighed.

"Lend me your sword a moment," he asked. "The King has given me power to make a knight. Kneel down—Rise, Sir John Dare—" Then he turned to my lady as she sat there watching us with her chin on her hand.

"Grant me a word, lady," he said. "You need not fear." She bowed and he drew near and whispered something that I did not hear. She flushed and nodded; and he knelt and kissed her hand. Then he walked away with bowed head to his horse; and when he had mounted he turned and bowed to me.

"Reckon me among your friends," he said. Then he rode away.

I went to help my lady to mount,



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"My lady laughed and held out the little green phial."

but she pushed my hand aside and sprang to the saddle unaided. We rode side by side without speaking, till we reached the spot where we had rested. Then she turned on me with great anger in her eyes.

"You would have given me to him," she cried.

"Madam," I said, "you will marry some day. I do not think you could marry a braver man, or one who loves you more."

Her eyes flashed again.

"That comes ill from a suitor for my hand."

She reined in her horse, and I reined in mine. The sudden jolt made me groan, for I was faint from loss of blood.

"I have ventured my life for you," I told her. "It comes ill from you to taunt me now. If I were not a poor soldier of fortune I were indeed a suitor for your hand." I reeled again in my saddle, for a faintness was coming upon me; and she drew the gray mare closer and caught me by the arm.

"If my suitor you say you are, my

suitor you are," she cried, "till you are refused."

"If you would have that pleasure, Madam," I cried sternly, "have it now, when I am bleeding for you. Lady of Mere, will you marry me?"

I reeled again and felt myself slipping from the saddle; and suddenly she caught me in her arms.

"I will!" she said. "I will!"

Then I felt myself swaying and swaying, and remembered no more till I found myself lying on the grass with my head on her lap and my helmet unloosed; and she was crying over me, with her sweet face close to mine; and I laughed in a thin, weak voice that I scarcely knew.

"My wage," I begged, "lady dear."

"I have paid you before," she said, blushing prettily.

"Pay me again," I entreated, "for charity."

"No," she said, "not for charity." Her arm drew my head a little closer; and the sun sparkled in her eyes.

"For love!" I whispered; and in a moment her lips were against mine.



His One Administration

BY HUGH PENDEXTER

Quarrelsome Central America has given many revolutions to history, some exceedingly eccentric, others, just plain, vulgar killings; but I doubt if ever there was a more picturesque insurrection than that in which Tiberius Smith, of Vermont, filled the president's chair for one week, and with his reserve battery of comic opera singers defied all comers. The passing of Tiberius and his administration is not mentioned in history, nor did the consular agent hear of it in time to stir up the newspaper men in Washington with sanguinary cablegrams. But the story of that glorious week makes brave reading, nevertheless, and the battle put up by the Green Mountain man and his corps of gayly clad sopranos and a light brigade of giggling danseuses, reinforced by sad-voiced contraltos, an Alpine shepherd, a regulation pirate, and much green room truck, incidentally demonstrates that art and science need not always yield to brute force.

Billy Campbell told me the story. His stage name was Rupert Ravenshaw; but since he went lame with a cut through the tendon Achilles he has lapsed into plain "Billy." Tiberius Smith is the hero. As Billy told the yarn his eyes grew soft and he murmured, "He was a man. Heaven knows why his folks dubbed him Tiberius; maybe, to get away from the Smith. But when it came to doing things, he was the greatest Roman on the asphalt.

"Tib—you know we called him Tib for short—had a way of making every one and every thing loyal to him. When his round, brown eyes concentrated in two beady twinkles, you had to believe in him and do his

bidding. He believed in himself, and simply bubbled over with assurance when making the hardest shots imaginable. And he had the blamest schemes. Yet, most of them pulled through in one way or another. If he didn't land what he was gunning for, he'd net something else almost as good. So when he decided to take a comic opera troupe to Guatemala City, Mazie Adams sidestepped thirty per week in order to lead the ballet, and I was hypnotized to go as first tenor. There were twenty-eight of us all told, four men and two dozen women. Tiberius said he could surround enough Aztec gold in Guatemala to make bondholders of us all for life. He believed it, and hang me if we all didn't after he'd given us a con about 'the luxurious life in the tropics,' 'the Croesus Dons of the Blue Pacific,' and the like. It was the Dons that caught Mazie Adams and the other girls.

"Well, we sailed in November from 'Frisco, bound for San Jose de Guatemala. From there we were to take diligences to the capital. Our troupe was about all the little coast-wise steamer had aboard, and when we were bobbing about off Champerico it began to blow up a regular hummer. The captain wanted to land us there, but Tib said San Jose or zero, and on we rolled. I was sorry, and so were the others; for the storm now became a hurricane and the captain decided he couldn't make San Jose, as that port has no harbor, but is simply an open roadstead. I believe we were to luff, or to loaf, in the offing, or thereabouts, and then beat in when the wind went down. But we didn't. Instead, we

boomed right by in the night, and after a miserable ten hours found ourselves in Arcate, a small town that would make a sewing-machine feel homesick.

"Arcate is made up of a dozen wooden houses, built down close to the beach, and one street running back about five blocks from the shore. Along this artery of travel are a handful of native huts of bamboo-sticks, covered with leaves of the cocoa-nut palm, while in the environs of the burg poisonous pools of stagnant water fill the air with miasma, steaming thickly in the ninety-degree heat. Mazie Adams crept down to the baggage deck and wept bitterly.

"'Cheer up, little one,' encouraged Tiberius soothingly. 'For every tear now shed you shall have a piece of ice to wear on those fairy fingers.'

"But as if the heavy atmosphere and sickening odors were not enough, the tin boiler in our little craft blew up near daybreak, and we were forced to go ashore in our night clothes, where we shivered in rugs and old sails until the broiled sun relieved the situation. To our joy we found all of our stage trunks had been saved, but our every-day finery was naught.

"'Get busy,' cried Tiberius in his merry bass. 'Unpack the trunks and slip into the calico of Act I. When we reach Guaty we'll have some nice, new linen suits. Remember, children, I'm all that ever was, multiplied by two.'

"And that's what we had to do, and a nice looking lot we were. Mazie and the other fairies in pink tights and long bespangled cloaks didn't go so bad with the furnishings, but the pirate, George Hanscom, and I, the Alpine shepherd, kind of jarred on the rest of the fur-

niture. Tib's rotund, energetic form was encased in a tin suit of mediæval armor, and he swore it felt good. By the time the town was fairly awake we were all arrayed in our picnic clothes, and I guess they thought we were a sure-enough bunch of fairies.

"While the dusky rabble was enjoying us with wonder-lit eyes, a tall, thin, mahogany-skinned man approached and greeted us in good old Anglo-Sax. He said he was Alfred Jones, more commonly known on the coast as 'Banana' Jones. He had lived in the country for fifteen years and was too lazy to leave it. He informed us he could talk any lingo between Purgatory and Guatemala City, and Tib at once hired him as ticket seller. Tib, himself, threw a fine cluster of Spanish, having toured a circus through South America once on a time. But he was shy on dialects.

"So Banana Jones was delegated to scout for some diligences, and he said he would, once he was able to tear his eyes from Mazie, and was just explaining that he hadn't seen a white woman for ten years, when fifty tatterdemalions, armed with ancient guns and a large accumulation of realty on their hands and bare feet, came howling down the lane.

"'I forgot,' said Banana Jones simply, 'there's a bit of a revolution on, and the insurrectionists hold the town. They are expecting a president from 'Frisco. The *junta* was to send them down a regular fire-eater this week.'

"'That's me,' cried Tib. 'I'm on! I'm the president! I go a mile in less than nothing. I never did start a game but what something good turned up unexpectedly. Tell 'em I'm their feudal lord.'

"'Well, I'll be blasted,' gasped

Banana Jones. Then he added, 'Do I get all the banana privileges between here and Sonsonate?'

"'You certainly do,' answered Tiberius, drawing his tin rapier and jolting his helmet into a jaunty position.

"Jones ran toward the mob and began a harangue in which 'Don Señor Tiberio,' and '*viva la libertad*' figured extensively, and when he was done the ragamuffins danced about us in glee and one squint-eyed ruffian sought to encompass Mazie Adams's fair waist with his dirty paw. But Tib lunged ferociously at him with his Toledo, Ohio, blade, and the gang evidently set us down for born fighters.

"'They dope you out as High Muck-a-Muck and accept you,' said Jones, 'but they want to know if you've brought any arms and powder.'

"'Tell 'em I've brought art, music, beauty and science, and that against that quartette prosaic explosives aren't deuce-high in a well-thumbed euchre deck,' retorted Tib grandly. Then he tipped us the cue and we all burst into a few sweet strains of song, as sung in the ensemble of 'The Dear Gazelle.' It fetched 'em, sir. It fetched 'em to their knees. They grovelled. I guess they'd have chuckled the whole blooming revolution for reserved seats in our show. But Tiberius had made up his mind to act the conqueror, and he told Jones to take us to the most pretentious habitation in town, that he might confiscate it for government purposes. A miserable little hotel, built to accommodate about fifteen, was the best thing in this line, and into it we went, while all the regular boarders departed via the back door.

"'But what about weapons?' persisted Jones dubiously.

"Tiberius pondered thoughtfully, and Hanscom, the pirate, tapped the hardware in his belt and said, 'We've got them all here.'

"'We have the kinetograph,' reminded Tiberius.

"'What's that? A machine gun?' cried Jones eagerly.

"Tiberius looked at him sadly and then explained it was merely a device to throw moving-pictures on a screen.

"'But pictures won't hurt 'em,' bemoaned Jones.

"'No,' cried Tiberius exultantly, 'but it'll scare 'em like the deuce. Why, man, in that one big box I've columns of infantry, heavy artillery, troops of cavalry, a little drummer boy, a Red Cross society and the Private's Farewell to His Aged Mother. It's the most economical method of transporting field forces in the world.'

"Then, after he had spoken several more pieces, Jones saw the illumination and his hard-baked face cracked into various smiles. 'If they'll only come by night,' he murmured.

"You see, we carted the picture-machine around to amuse the audience between the acts of 'The Dear Gazelle,' and almost all of the pictures were war scenes. Fortunately it had escaped injury in the explosion and only needed to be dried out to be in fighting trim.

"But the rest of us hadn't come down to Central America to build up republics, and we were in a fair way to mutiny. Hanscom had just killed a tarantula, and was now writing a weepy letter to his old mother in Utica, N. Y. Mazie was sobbing that she did not see any chance of freezing her digits with Guatemala ice, and the rest of the bunch were swearing, or sniveling, as the sex demanded, when Tiberius visited us.

" 'Children,' said he kindly, 'list. Why weep? We've arrived here. The boat is busted. We can't leave till another comes. It seems two factions are sparring for the strangle hold on this forsaken land. If we remain neutral, one side or the other, or both, will pick us up and sell us as slaves to owners of the dank mangrove swamps.' Tib didn't know a mangrove from a yard of felt, but it sounded good and he used it. 'Think, Mazie, of being compelled to pluck rubber gum with those fragile lily stalks,' he said. 'Think, Gertrude, of making bean bread for some chocolate-frosted brute that remembers when he walked on all fours. Now if I can obtain the backing of one party we are that much stronger, and will come out all right. Remember, Tiberius Smith always wins. Why, children, once I fell so low that I was forced to join an Uncle Tom's Cabin company and play I was ice in the Ohio River. Did I stay ice? Ask me. To-day you behold in me the sole owner of 'The Dear Gazelle' opera troupe, and president pro tem. of Iscanlati, or whatever name under high heavens they call it.'

"Of course there was a lot of horse sense in Tib's talk, but I knew he was playing president just through his lust of empire. He told me afterwards that if he could have held down the job he had intended to map out a canal route and sneak a stake from Uncle Sam.

"But to return to the well-filled inn and the homesick allies of the insurrectionists. That afternoon Tib and Jones reconnoitered the only approach from the interior; the only road over which the enemy could come. This ran dead against a big white cliff and then swung sharp to the west and made a bee line to the beach. Tib deployed the native

troops far out beyond the cliff with instructions to hike back to the hotel if they scented the foe. In a casual way he led them to believe that they wouldn't have to do much fighting. Just take prisoners after the new president had shaken a little 'parlor magic out of his cuff. This pleased them immensely, and they said we were their saviors, jupiter staters and all that kind of stuff. But we were in a very disagreeable situation. The warm climate didn't make the 'Gazelle' rags so bad for the girls, and we men knew we could get used to our make-up after a while. But only a narrow strip of beach separated us from the sharks, and Tib and his picture game from the dusky triflers in front. However, it was grin and bear it, and we were there to tote the machine and fixings up to a point near the white cliff.

"No one troubled us that night, but on the next a horrible screeching aroused us from uneasy slumbers, and when the pirate and I got down into the open we could just catch a glimpse of Tib's armor twinkling in the moonlight far ahead.

" 'Bring your shepherd's horn, Rupert,' cried Tib—he always called me by my stage name—and I obeyed him.

"A long, lean valentine guided me up the road to the firing line, to where Tib and Jones were stationed. To my horror I found them facing the cliff, backs turned to the enemy.

" 'For heaven's sake!' I cried, 'let us receive our wounds in the breast and die facing the tyrant.'

" 'When I begin to let loose Uncle Sam, just sound some merry lay on the horn,' ignored Tib. 'Give 'em boots and saddles and a bit of that Tyrolese warble.'

"I was so choked up I didn't believe I could wind the horn, but Tib and Jones were cool enough.

Tib had the machine all ready, and as a fearful howl went up behind us he turned on the illuminations. There on the cliff pranced the Fighting Seventh Cavalry, while Banana Jones split the shadows with hoarse shouts and military orders, accompanying his vocal stunts by hurling rocks among the bushes, in short, making enough noise for a whole regiment.

"'An' would ye save me, blow!" cried Tib.

"Forgetting my peril, really believing that the brave phantoms on the white rock stood ready to succor me, I fixed my eyes on Old Glory and gave them Dixie. Any one ought to fight by that tune! Between notes I could hear the great gasp of astonishment from the foe, as they halted. Then the crackling in the bushes began to recede, and Banana Jones chuckled, 'They've vamoosed! Best pictures I ever saw.'

"You can safely gamble that the insurrectionists down on the beach looked upon us as real warriors when the sun rose and brought no invaders. Tiberius was so chesty that he wanted to pursue the enemy and incidentally annex San Salvador. But as white cliffs aren't always handy, we held him back.

"Well, three days passed and our stage costumes began to look tarnished. Then came the second attack. Our scouts said it was a different party, and when they approached the pass it was hardly dark enough to operate the machine. Tib commanded us all to follow him, and arranged us in a semi-circle, position for the curtain raise in Act II.

"'Now warble!' he commanded, and we did, with a fringe of lime light playing over our rich vestments and scared faces. What the enemy thought on seeing twenty-

eight fairies all covered with gold and cut glass, giving the serenade, will never be known. But it staggered 'em. Mazie Adams and the other Venuses sang and looked like angels, and the brownies didn't care to buck up against a celestial choir without any investigation.

"'If you can hold 'em a few minutes, we'll win in a canter,' cried Tib.

"At that we all stalked forward a few paces with the best lilt of the whole piece pealing from our ruby lips. Then came the welcome order to stand aside, and the faithful old picture gallery began to squirt photos on the cliff. What with the howling of the ballet, the hoarse cries of Jones, the bugle-calls and prancing pictures, the brownies were held up for fair. And the funny part of it was, our allies were as scared as the enemy.

"'See 'em run!' cried Banana Jones.

"Then, just as the old One Hundred and Fortieth Infantry began tramping by, we all, with one common impulse, insane with elation, charged the paralyzed ranks in the brush. With one long drawn-out screech they fled, but not before one beggar gave me this cut in the leg with a big cheese knife. Tiberius would run amuck, and soon distanced us, the twinkling and clanging of his tin suit only revealing his whereabouts. When the company caught up with him he was trying to lift a good-sized chest in his arms.

"'It's probably full of tortillas,' remarked the pirate, after we had returned to the hotel.

"'I think, children, it's their war chest,' gasped Tiberius, who had been unable to carry it alone.

"We tore off the cover and there were rows upon rows of yellow wafers. We divided 'em up equally

and Jones said each one's share amounted to about \$1,500.

"Whether it was the loss of their funds, or the moving pictures that turned the trick, we were not destined to learn. For on the seventh day a little vermin-infested

tub poked her nose into the harbor, and we all shipped for San Jose, where we picked up some civilized rags and caught a 'Frisco steamer.

"No; we didn't go to Guatemala. Our costumes were ruined, you know."

The Primrose Path of Dalliance

BY LEIGH GORDON GILTNER

When Trevorton, in quest of local color for his new pastoral novel, stepped off the train at Bunkersville, the conviction that he was likely to find himself confronted with an embarrassment of chromatic riches impressed itself upon him. A single glance comprehended the entire town, comprising the railway station; a box-like frame structure serving the double function of post-office and village emporium and known locally as "the store"; a dilapidated dwelling or two, and a hitching-rack. Trevorton was proceeding to turn his attention to the population of the hamlet—largely in evidence on the verandah of "the store"—when a long, lank individual, who looked as if he might have stepped out of the pages of a comic weekly, approached and hailed him.

"Howdy, sir, howdy!"—Trevorton felt his fingers crushed in the grip of a huge, horny hand—"Your name Trevorton? Mine's Skinner, and I guess you wuz lookin' fer me. The waggin's over yon way and I reckon we'd better be travelin'. Jest gimme your baggage check."

If the humor the critics considered characteristic of Trevorton's fiction had extended to actualities, he might have found a certain amusement in

the spectacle of a man of mien distinctly urban and attire of unmistakable London cut, perched up beside an individual as unmistakably rustic on the seat of a dilapidated spring wagon, in the rear section of which a barrel of flour, a coal-oil can with a potato on its spout, a jug of molasses, a plowshare and some miscellaneous packages jostled an immaculate suit-case. Trevorton's previous acquaintance with the country had been derived from week's-end visits to the perfectly appointed suburban homes of his friends. The real thing, as indicated by his present cicerone and equipage, was a complete novelty in his experience. But, the author reflected, as they bumped painfully over an ill-kept country road, this was precisely the sort of thing he had come for, and the locality in which he found himself promised to furnish exactly the setting he wanted for his story. Trevorton had always been too conscientious—or too cautious—to write about scenes and subjects of which he knew nothing, and he had made up his mind to a month or two of martyrdom, if need be, in the acquisition of material.

The personality of Mr. Skinner, in his faded pepper-and salt coat, his patched jeans trousers tucked into



DRAWN BY WALDO BOWSER

"The elderly, hard-featured woman rose stiffly at his approach."

clumsy boots, his hickory shirt and battered straw hat—an *ensemble* suggesting the countryman of the cartoonist—seemed predicative of an environment harmoniously unprepossessing; but instead of the comfortless frame structure Trevorton had feared, the Skinner domicile proved to be a rambling, old-fashioned brick building set in a tangle of shrubs and

flowers in the midst of a grove of ancient pines.

Trevorton breathed a sigh of relief which deepened into a rapturous inspiration when his eye fell upon the picture framed in by the vines shading the piazza. Beside the elderly, hard-featured woman who rose stiffly at his approach, stood, embodied in the flesh, exactly the heroine he had,

in an inspired moment, imagined for his novel. He decided instantly that she was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen—not with the cultivated, conventional beauty of the women of his world, but with a sort of sylvan loveliness suggestive of nymph or hamadryad. She seemed the spirit of the woods and fields incarnate. Trevorton felt that the Fates had been good to him. Here all about him lay the setting for his story and here to his hand was a heroine who surpassed his dreams—though sober reason (some faint glimmer of which still survived within him) admonished him that when she spoke she might possibly break the charm—and every known rule of English grammar as well.

Mrs. Skinner, a gaunt, angular woman with a faded wisp of colorless hair drawn tightly back from a face as sharp and hard as a hickory nut, advanced cordially, though with some embarrassment, to greet the stranger, whom Mr. Skinner, disappearing in the direction of the stables, had left to introduce himself.

"I reckon you're the summer boarder," she said in a high nasal drawl. "Maud, this here's Mr. Trevorton. It's right hot and some dusty and I reckon you're plum beat out comin' so fur. Set down and cool off fer a spell!"

Trevorton, nothing loth, seated himself so that without apparent intent he could look full at the girl, whose simple blue dimity set off her delicate beauty, he thought, as no Parisian creation could have done. "Thou'rt like unto a flower" rose instinctively in his thoughts whenever he glanced at her—a proceeding which, despite his previous claim to good breeding, threatened to become a continuous performance. He was divided between wondering

that so exquisite a blossom should have sprung from this gnarled parent bough and hoping (yet half fearing) to hear her voice, when at last she spoke, dispelling at a breath both the wonder and the fear.

"Aunt Hitty," she said, and Trevorton's heart leaped ecstatically. The connection was rather more remote than he had hoped, and her voice was as sweet as her face. "Mr. Trevorton has had a long, tiresome journey. Perhaps he might like to go to his room."

In the quiet of his own apartment, Trevorton made oblation to the gods of chance. He had anticipated a period of martyrdom in the interest of art, a term of exile from the conditions he had fancied essential to his happiness—and had found Arcady!

"'Paradise enow!'" he murmured half aloud—and then swore at himself for a sentimental idiot.

All through the evening meal, to which he was shortly summoned, he found himself fearfully awaiting disillusionment at the hands of Miss Skinner—he shuddered at the name. A cognomen so uncouth conjoined with a personality so poetic jarred upon his sense of congruity—but there was no slightest lapse in word or manner. She said little, but neither voice nor accent affronted his sensitive ear—though whenever she lifted her eyes, wonderful, changeful hazel eyes, to his, he was conscious of an abdication of the critical faculty.

That night he sat for an hour alone with the girl on the piazza (the senior Skinners went to bed with the birds). There was no moon, but the glitter of countless fireflies vied with the brighter radiance of the stars; the scent of fragrant clover swept up to them from the meadows below; the brooding tenderness of the sum-



DRAWN BY WALDO BOWSER

"Maud was sitting upon the topmost step."

mer night encompassed them in an isolation which Trevorton somehow found strangely sweet. It was only when again in the solitude of his chamber that it occurred to him with a shock that not once during the evening had he thought of Sylvia. As if in atonement for even so brief a lapse, he wrote before he slept that night a long and ardent letter to the

lady of his heart. He described in detail his new and novel surroundings; he touched humorously upon the characteristics of his rustic host and hostess, but oddly enough, he made no slightest mention of Maud.

Trevorton's slumbers were disturbed at dawn the next morning by the mingled clamor of barn-lot and poultry-yard, the morning joy of

birds and the noisy clangor of the farm bell—in lieu of the familiar city sounds which had come to fall unheeded on his accustomed ear. He made a rapid toilet and stepped briskly out upon the piazza. Maud was sitting upon the topmost step, busying herself with a profusion of flowers with the dew still fresh upon them.

"Good morning, Miss Skinner," he said gaily. "How thoughtful of you to have ordered such a charming day in my honor!"

She glanced up at him with a startled expression which softened swiftly into a smile. She did not speak, but her smile was adequate to make eloquent the longest pause, Trevorton thought. She wore a simple little pink frock and a beruffled white sunbonnet. Sylvia's purchases in millinery were always the creations of Virot, yet it struck Trevorton that neither she nor any other woman of his acquaintance had ever donned anything in the way of head-dress quite so fetching as that which framed Maud's flower-like face. The girl's almost too seraphic and ethereal beauty was humanized by a nose deliciously *retroussé*, and a dimpled chin which lent the touch of piquancy requisite to redeem it from the faultily faultless. Somehow Trevorton found it the most alluring face he had ever seen—not excepting Sylvia's patrician countenance; but secure in his allegiance to his *fiancée* he only thought what havoc its charm might have played with his heart had he been free to study it from other than an artistic and purely impersonal standpoint.

Throughout the day and the days which followed, Trevorton found himself thrown inevitably much into the girl's society. They took long strolls together; they hunted flowers and ferns in the neighboring woods;

they watched the sunsets and sat through the long summer twilights in a companionable quiet—which enabled Trevorton to make an intimate personal study of her—purely, as he frequently assured himself, in the interest of his art. What most impressed him in the course of their acquaintance was the girl's absolute sincerity and ingenuousness. Sound- ing the depths of her mentality, he told himself, was like gazing into the pellucid waters of a meadow brook—though she had certain subtle reserves. Her cloistered life spent in this obscure locality had kept her as effectually remote from outer influence as though she had lived within convent walls; she was absolutely "unspotted from the world"; contact with the white purity of her thought was like approaching a shrine.

Her ignorance of the ways of the world was almost vestal. Of the earth's great movements she seemed utterly unaware; of music, art and literature she apparently knew little; she seemed dowered with a serene sylvan unconsciousness of everything except the elementary conditions which surrounded her, and to have little thought or care for the things which he had hitherto considered vital; yet oddly enough her provincialism (which he was pleased to regard as the attitude of the dryad toward the mortal world) did not repel or even displease this man of fastidious tastes. Without patronage or pedantry he strove to broaden her horizon, to open for her the door of the world of books and music and art—the world he loved. He sketched for her on the tinkling old piano in the Skinner parlor the scores of his favorite operas; he tried to interest her in the elementary principles of art as applied to the natural world about her; he read to her from the few books that



DRAWN BY WALDO BOWSER

"Trevorton did not look down again—he had learned his lesson."

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companied him in all his wanderings—his Shakespeare, his Omar, his Browning—and rejoiced to find her keenly responsive to the influence of the masters.

As the days passed, Trevorton found himself distinctly at a loss. For the first time within his memory he was unable to understand, to analyze or to regulate his own emotions. It dismayed him to find that despite a conscious effort to keep it steadily before him, Sylvia's image was waxing dim. He had always regarded her as the embodiment of his ideal; her beauty delighted his artistic sensibilities; her exquisite refinements of taste and thought, her intellectuality and literary percipience responded to his own intellectual needs; her social grace and charm appealed to him as a man of the world—in short, he could find neither fault nor flaw in her composition—and yet—He was guilty conscious of a sense of revolt, a secret turning from established ties. An idle fancy, he assured himself; a brief midsummer madness that would pass with the waning season. He sought refuge in the doctrines of Plato and deceived—or tried to deceive—himself with sophistries.

One afternoon as the two were clambering up a rocky slope rising from the little woodland back of the farmhouse, Trevorton, a little in advance of Maud, heard the girl suddenly utter a sharp exclamation. He turned quickly—to find her leaning against a tree, her face white to the lips, her brows contracted with pain. As he sprang toward her she swayed forward and he caught her in his arms.

"What is it?" he cried a little wildly, "Miss Skinner—Maud—"

"My ankle," she whispered faintly, "I think I must have turned it on a stone. It is nothing. I—"

Her head drooped heavily against Trevorton's arm.

On the instant, the author's instinct, never wholly dormant in Trevorton, recognized a familiar situation—a situation so conventional, so trite that no self-respecting writer would deign to make use of it. There flashed upon his mental retina the picture (so often evoked by the penny-a-liner) of the stalwart hero bearing in his arms the heroine with the opportunely injured ankle. (Trevorton had always wondered how the author would have managed had his hero chanced to be short and the heroine stout.) Though he always closed a book in disgust when he chanced upon this ancient device, he was somehow perfectly aware of the requirements of the situation, and he promptly resolved that he would not be betrayed into the regulation action. He swore to himself that he would *not* imprint fervid kisses on her lips or breathe impassioned utterances into her unconscious ears according to tradition. He would, rather, carry her home as speedily as circumstances would allow and turn her over to Aunt Hitty's ministrations.

But, unfortunately, Trevorton just here did precisely the one thing he should not have done. He looked down at the still face against his arm. Instantly his sophistries forsook him; he lost sight of the fact that his interest in the girl was wholly impersonal; he forgot that she was of the plebeian house of Skinner; his heart began to beat tumultuously; every pulse of his body thrilled and stirred. His eyes devoured eagerly the tender beauty of her face, the sweep of the long dark lashes, the gracious curves of cheek and lips and chin—that dimpled chin was his undoing! He bent and kissed her.

The girl opened her eyes.

"I think I can walk home, if you'll kindly give me your arm, Mr. Trevorton." Her tone was glacial. Trevorton, his face a vivid crimson, offered his arm in silence, but when Maud tried to put her foot to the ground, the attempt wrung a little cry from her. There was nothing else for it, so Trevorton, feeling a happy combination of blackguard, cad and idiot, gathered her up with an awkward "Allow me" and strode off with her as swiftly as he might. He did not look down again—he had learned his lesson. He was holding an iron grip upon his emotions and himself. The thought of Sylvia was dominant now. He would not—must not—think of the girl pressed against his heart—the girl he loved. Trevorton stopped lying to himself with a sense of relief. It was a comfort, though a sorry one, to have done with equivocations and pretense.

That night he fought the thing out with himself. The situation was scarcely an heroic one. Look at it from whatever viewpoint he might, he felt himself convicted a cad. The *fiancée* of one woman, he had allowed himself to love and to make love to another. What that other's attitude toward him might be, he could only guess. He was not in the least sure she cared for him, and he had no right to ask or even to surmise. Throughout the night he was torn by a conflict of emotion and principle, but resolution came with the morning. He would preserve such shreds of honor as were left him, take the chances that Maud did not care—and go back to Sylvia.

Maud met him at breakfast quite simply and unconstrainedly. Her accident, she said, had been a slight one and she was entirely free from pain.

The meal was nearly over before Trevorton found courage to say:

"Mr. Skinner, I find it necessary to return to New York this morning. Can you arrange to take me to the station?" He did not look at Maud.

"Well, now," his host replied dubiously, "I'm mighty busy with the hayin', and Hitty's got the dinner to git, but mebbe Maud will drive ye over."

To Trevorton's surprise he heard the girl promptly assent. He felt that fate had played him false.

The drive to the station was the most uncomfortable he had ever experienced. Maud talked rather more than her wont, while he himself could only manage an occasional monosyllable. Pauses, long, frequent and awkward, ensued. Trevorton dared not look at the girl lest he should break into impassioned protestation and pleading. He would not allow himself to fancy what she must think of him. He knew well enough what he thought of himself.

The train was just due when they reached the station, and turning over their ancient steed to a grinning negro, they hurried across to the little depot. They did not enter the stuffy waiting-room, but stood for an instant—which seemed an age—looking anywhere but at each other. Then the whistle of the New York Mail sounded down the track and Trevorton went to pieces.

"Maud!" he cried desperately, "Maud, I—I can't leave you——"

With a mighty roar and rumble the train drew in. Maud held out her hand.

"Good-bye, Mr. Trevorton," she said quietly. "I fear you must hurry. The train stops only a moment."

As Trevorton stumbled blindly into the smoker he was dimly con-

scious of a man he knew rushing past him with a hasty:

"Hello, old man! See you later!"

Trevorton, turning his gaze to the window for a last brief glimpse of the girl he had left behind him, received the surprise of his life. Maud was smiling radiantly up into the eyes of Trevorton's friend and fellow clubman, Mr. Reginald Kent, who was beaming delightedly down upon her. Trevorton's brain reeled. He reached the door in time to see Reggie, lingering till the latest possible moment, make a rush for the rear platform of the last car, swing himself lightly up and wave an adieu to the smiling girl. Then he entered the coach and hailed Trevorton blithely.

"Well, old boy," he called cheerily, advancing with outstretched hand, "where did you get on? I saw you come through into the smoker

just now, but couldn't stop. I'd caught sight of a friend at the station—the last place in the world I'd have expected to find an acquaintance!—and I hopped off for a word with her."

"May I ask," Trevorton queried stiffly, "where you met Miss Skinner?"

Reggie stared.

"Skinner?" he echoed. "What are you talking about? Why, that's Maud Ward, the cleverest *ingenue* on the American stage! She stars in a pastoral play this fall, and she's been summering here in the wilderness, studying the type. They say she's to marry Lansing, the copper king, at the end of the season. She's a corker, Trevorton! Ever see her act?"

Trevorton's reply was a trifle long in coming.

"Yes," he said at last.

The Revolt of Luella

BY LIZZIE M. PAGE

Miss Prudence Harding and her sister Luella were wending their way homewards, after attending service in the white church on the hill. The April day was mild and full of sunshine, pleasant earthy odors, and trills of early spring birds. In the heart of Luella there was a vague stirring and unrest; she wondered if it could be discontent.

"I called that an excellent sermon," observed Miss Prudence, stepping gingerly over a small mud puddle with carefully elevated skirts.

"Yes," responded Luella absently, "I guess 'twas." Miss Prudence glanced sharply at her sister. Luella had not seemed quite like herself lately. Perhaps she was bilious; and

Miss Prudence secretly resolved to put some thoroughwort a-steep that very night.

"And the singin' was full as good's common," she went on. This remark, however, fell on unheeding ears; for Luella had stopped in the middle of the road, and, with pleased attention, was listening to the warbled greeting of a red-breasted stranger, who was holding forth from the branch of a way-side tree.

"The first robin!" exclaimed Luella. "I'm always so glad to see them!"

"Do come along, Luella," said Miss Prudence impatiently. "No danger but you'll see robins enough—cherry year, too! For my part," she

grumbled, "I shouldn't feel called upon to mourn if I didn't see another one this year."

Luella looked quite horrified. A world without robins! She did not like even to imagine such a dreadful lack. It would be almost as lonely as a world without children.

Something of this she said aloud to her sister, whose countenance softened a trifle. Because of the little dead sister so loved and mourned these many years, Miss Prudence had always retained a tenderness for children, which, however, was in danger of being crushed out by the icy crust of selfishness that was gradually forming around her heart.

The "Harding girls," as they were called, were as unlike in character and disposition as in appearance. Miss Prudence, plain and unprepossessing; Luella, comely, gentle and gracious. Grandpa Norton, their mother's father, used to say that "Prudence was a Harding, through and through, and Luella all Norton."

John Harding had been a "terrible worker," as his neighbors expressed it, and, at a time of life when he should have been full of vigor, he grew prematurely old and was forced to loose his grasp upon bank books, farming implements and, finally, life itself. A little later, the wife and mother closed her tired eyes upon a world which, for her, had seemed to hold little save oceans of care and mountains of work. For a brief time, absorbed in caring for baby Lilian, hurrying and hoarding had ceased for the girls. But after the frail little child had been laid beside her mother, it slowly began again.

Not that there was the slightest need, for there was a fine farm unencumbered, besides other property, and all for the two girls. But the Harding propensities were strongly

developed in Prudence, and as the years went by Luella began to realize that it was the same old story continued. One driving, the other holding the plough; only now it was she who held the plough instead of her mother. Lately she had felt as if she were enclosed by high walls, which were gradually closing in and would in time shut out from her life all hope and happiness.

As they drew near the house, Luella stepped aside to inspect the flower-beds beside the path, to find that the tulips and daffodils were bravely pushing their way out to air and sunlight. "I wish," she murmured, "that I could as easily creep out of my prison."

Suddenly, a strange expression came to her face, as a wild thought flashed through her brain. "Why not? Surely she was old enough," she reflected with mild bitterness.

Luella straightened from her stooping posture and entered the house to aid her sister in preparing dinner. Hiram, the "hired man," did not appear at the table.

"Probably gallivantin' off somewhere with Martha Wiggins," commented Miss Prudence curtly.

"Well," said Luella quietly, "Martha'll make him a good wife."

"Wife!" exclaimed Miss Prudence with a disdainful sniff. "What does he want of one? Don't we give him good victuals to eat, and keep his clothes mended? I'm sure we don't need her here!"

Luella thought differently, as her sister knew; but she made no response.

"I do wish," said Miss Prudence, changing the subject, "that old Miss Hooper would get a new bonnet; she can't make any more changes in hers, unless she wears it hind side before. I should think," she added, "you'd take the feather off

of your hat, Luella, and put on that bunch of green leaves before next Sunday, seein' it'll be Easter."

"I don't expect to be here," replied Luella, fairly frightened at herself for so quickly converting her secret desire into boldly-spoken resolve. "I'm thinking of going to Boston," she explained, in response to her sister's exclamation of surprise.

"To Boston?" repeated Miss Prudence, who had dropped her knife and fork, and was staring at Luella in amazement. "What on earth are you talkin' about, Luella Harding? I should like to know what put Boston into your head. You've been there twice—once with Grandpa on an excursion, and once with Cousin Mary. I should think that would do," she concluded with emphasis.

"That was years ago," said Luella, gaining courage with every word. "And I was only there a day, both times. I want to hear some Easter music and see some Easter flowers."

"For goodness sake!" exclaimed Miss Prudence in disgust. "The idea of traipsin' off clear to Boston just to hear a little singin' and see a few flowers! There'll be good music in our own church," she continued. "The choir'll sing Easter pieces, and Abbie Martin'll sing a solo—you know she always does."

"Yes," assented Luella, "I know she always does."

"And Mis' Deacon Downes'll carry her calla over to the church, same as she always has; and I shall carry my geranium," glancing towards the window at her sole surviving green relic of a hard winter. "There'll be flowers there," she concluded, "you know there always are."

"Yes," answered Luella patiently, "I know there always are."

"Then," inquired Miss Prudence with considerable severity, "what are you goin' to the city for?"

"There's a difference," replied Luella vaguely.

Miss Prudence gazed at her sister in uncomprehending displeasure. Well, one thing was clearly apparent, it was not biliousness that ailed Luella. She finished her dinner in meditative silence. "I don't suppose," she said, as she finally sat back in her chair, "that it's one mite of use to argue. When the Nortons do get their minds made up, they'll answer back all day as mild as milk; but they're as set as the hills. So I expect you'll go, no matter what happens. I guess you'll find it'll cost something," she concluded, rising from the table and pushing her chair back with no little emphasis.

"Yes," replied Luella pleasantly, as she arose and proceeded to assist Miss Prudence in clearing the table. "Yes, I shall go, and it will cost something."

No further allusions were made during the day to the subject uppermost in the minds of both. But on the way to prayer-meeting that evening, Miss Prudence, in a rather formal tone, asked her sister "where she expected to put up."

"I don't know yet," answered Luella hesitatingly. "I sh'll have Hiram take me up to the village Wednesday morning—I want to visit a little with Cousin Mary and fix up my things a little. She'll tell me where to stop—she's been up to the city several times. Then I sh'll start Saturday morning—on the train that goes about nine o'clock. I wish you would go along, too, Prudence," she added pleadingly.

"There'll be expense enough without me goin'," replied Miss Prudence curtly. "More'n one ten

dollars. I'd rather stay at home and clean house. I was calculatin' to begin this week," she concluded regretfully.

"Hire Sally Pocket to help in my place," suggested Luella.

"I guess I sha'n't hire house-cleanin' done," answered Miss Prudence indignantly. "I ain't done such a thing for years. No; I shall do what I can and finish after you get back." Luella making no response, the subject was dropped, and was not referred to the next day, except casually, by Luella.

Tuesday she began her modest preparations for her contemplated wild plunge into the giddy world. The "bunch of green leaves" was substituted for the meek and enduring "feather," and the few personal belongings deemed essential for use and adornment during her sojourn were bestowed in a small traveling-bag, borrowed for the occasion from a friendly neighbor. And Wednesday morning Luella, not without misgivings, however, set forth, charioteered by Hiram.

Miss Prudence's farewell was compounded of words of disapproval and ominous forebodings as to trains running off the tracks, and other horrible possibilities.

"There's one thing more," she called, as they drove away. "Above all things, Luella, remember about the gas. I've read such dreadful—" but they were out of hearing. It was not half so joyous a flitting as Luella had anticipated. She felt depressed and almost guilty. And had it not been for Hiram's homely but kind words of encouragement and approval, she would have been inclined to beat a retreat. As "boy and man" Hiram Jackson had worked for the sisters until he was, in New England good country fashion, considered quite one of the family.

How lonely it would be in the noisy city, thought Luella drearily, as they drove along. And lonelier at home, after her return, with no one with whom to talk it over. But her face was turned towards Boston, and, being a Norton, there would be no turning back. "Anyway," she unconsciously ejaculated, "I know it's right!"

"Right!" repeated Hiram, correctly interpreting Luella's thoughts. "If you mean about goin' away for a little vacation, of course it's 'right.' Just what you ought to done long ago. The only pity is that Prudence won't go along, too."

"I tried my best to coax her to," replied Luella sadly. "But she thinks my goin' is all a piece of folly. Maybe 'tis," she concluded with a sigh.

"'Tain't either," declared Hiram. "Everybody's travelin' nowadays. Land! if I wa'n't savin' every cent towards a home for Martha and me, you bet I'd go somewhere. As 'tis, I want to get settled down before I'm a hundred. I wish," he continued soberly, "that Prudence would come to see how handy 'twould be to have Martha 'round. There ain't either one of you over young," he concluded with unresented frankness.

"No," said Luella, a trace of sadness in her voice. "I've been realizing that lately." With this she relapsed into silence.

"Now you go in for a regular tear, Luella," was Hiram's parting injunction. "There's plenty of money," he added. "I know what's doin' on the farm."

That evening, Miss Prudence, weary after a day of ransacking closets and bureaus, putting aside clothing and vain searching for moths and carpet beetles, sat her down to rest. Too tired to sew or

even read, she presently fell into meditation as she sat by the window in the moonlight. Outside, everything looked unreal and lonely. The wind was rising, and the trees waved their leafless branches about in most pathetic and ghostly fashion. From somewhere in the distance came the dismal howling of an unhappy dog. Miss Prudence shuddered, and hoped he would come no nearer; it was a bad sign when they howled near a house.

Upon that she thought of little Lilian. Somehow Luella had looked like her—that mornin'. There was the same wistful look in her blue eyes, when she had urged her (Prudence) to accompany her. What if Luella—

"There!" she exclaimed aloud, "I do believe I'm growin' childish." With this she resolutely drew the curtain, and marched off to bed.

The following morning—after a night of retrospection and sleeplessness—Sally Pocket was summoned to assist in the work of the day.

"I'm dead beat out!" declared Miss Prudence, sinking into a chair at the supper table Friday night.

"Sh'd think you would be," responded Hiram dryly, helping himself generously to cold beans—they had "picked-up" meals these days. "Better take a vacation now, and go along with Luella," he added carelessly.

Miss Prudence looked up almost guiltily. The past two nights had been far more wearisome than the days. When slumber, elusive and fitful, had at last closed her eyes, it had proved anything but a respite for Miss Prudence. For sometimes she beheld Luella and Lilian—and always together. And again it was the shadowy, patient face of her mother or the toil-bent figure of her father. "What," in her waking

moments, which were many, she thought, "had it all amounted to?" Just the two of them—and all this property.

The night before, or more correctly, the morning of the same day, she had had a startling inspiration, and in vain did she strive to scoff at and drive it away; but it had remained with her all day. She had given Sally bread for soap, cleaned windows with her best white petticoat, and broken a dish—the first in years—and had finally said to herself that she guessed she was the one that needed dosing.

Saturday morning, Miss Prudence came down to breakfast with her best bonnet on. "Hiram," she said with much dignity, as he sat staring at her in amazement, "soon's breakfast I want you should harness; I'm goin' to the village. I'm thinkin'," she continued, a faint flush rising to her face, "of goin' to the city along with Luella. It ain't just the thing for her to be goin' 'way off there alone," she said primly. "Sally'll keep house—she's neat and honest," she added.

Hiram, with some difficulty, suppressed a smile. The idea of shy, sedate, and elderly Luella needing a chaperon appealed to his sense of humor. "That's the talk!" he exclaimed heartily. "Luella'll be as pleased as Punch!"

"Yes, I guess she will," responded Miss Prudence, her face lighting up. "You see, Hiram," she continued with unwonted meekness, "I've been doin' some thinkin' lately, and I guess I've been growin' a little near-sighted. Perhaps we had ought to be enjoying life a little better—Luella and me. And Hiram, if you'n Martha want to get married, and set up house-keeping in the west wing, before we get back, I'll have it as a little surprise for Luella.

We shall be gone ten days or more, anyway," she added.

Hiram drew a long breath, expelling it with a prolonged "Whe-ew!" a broad smile adorning his countenance. "Best news I've heard for one spell," he exclaimed ecstatically. "Well, now, I tell you, Martha'n I'll make the old farm hump itself this summer!" With this, having hastily swallowed his breakfast, he started for the stable, whistling merrily, leaving Miss Prudence to finish arraying herself for the projected journey.

So absorbed was Luella in watching for the coming of the train that was to bear her away to the land of joyous Easter carols and beautiful Easter lilies, she did not notice the arrival of her sister at the opposite side of the station platform. As Miss Prudence alighted, she caught sight of her sister, noting with a

twinge of remorse the pathetic shabbiness of her attire, and the lonely droop of the slight figure.

When, a few moments later, Miss Prudence appeared with bag and ticket, Luella stared in speechless astonishment. "Why, Prudence! what has happened—are you going away?" she inquired breathlessly.

"Nothing has happened," replied Miss Prudence, endeavoring to maintain a calm exterior; "only my mind-sight has come to me, and I begin to see that I need a vacation, too. Yes, I am goin' away—with you," she added gently. And at sight of the happiness that suddenly illumined the face of her sister, the icy crust, that had so nearly enveloped her soul, melted and resolved into a moisture that appeared behind her glasses, and caused a slight huskiness of voice as she exclaimed, "There! the train's comin', Luella!"

Diggs' Vacation

BY FRANK N. STRATTON

It seized Diggs as he lifted the last bolt to the shelf behind the silk counter of Billings' Dry Goods Bazaar. His ears buzzed queerly, his head swam, and he clung to the shelves for support. After he had recovered he recalled the doctor's advice.

"I suppose I'll have to do it," he thought, with a sigh.

His old knees shook as he stood on tip-toe before the cracked mirror in the dusty corner, to brush his few locks of thin, gray hair carefully over the bald spot, and readjust his faded tie.

The Head of the Bazaar was reaching up for his sun umbrella when Diggs entered the office.

"Mr. Billings," said Diggs, des-

perately, "I—I fear I shall have to ask for a short vacation."

The Head turned around ponderously, and glared down at Diggs over a vast expanse of shirt front and double chin.

"A vacation! When you know Thompson is away, Diggs!"

"I'm sorry, very sorry, sir," said Diggs, meekly, "but, really, my health demands it. I don't think I could keep on my feet much longer; and I stayed last year—to please you, you know."

"Humph! And how long a vacation do you think your state of health demands, Mr. Diggs?"

"Well, say to the fifteenth of next month," Diggs suggested, timorously.

"Impossible! I have arranged to begin my own vacation on the first. Make it to the first, Mr. Diggs."

"Yes, sir. Very good. Thank you, sir," assented Diggs, joyfully, backing away from The Presence.

"Two weeks, remember; no longer, Diggs."

"I shall return on the thirty-first, Mr. Billings; and I'm very greatly obliged to you."

That night, in his third-story room, Diggs carefully ran over his little check-book, and ascertained the exact balance in bank. It was alarmingly small. The last check—for Bobby—had been unusually large. Bobby's needs were growing yearly—but so was Bobby, thank goodness! He must be a fine, sturdy fellow now. Diggs hadn't seen him for more than a year. Last summer he had gone with a camping party to the Maine woods; the last holidays had been spent "with friends in New York"—Diggs' simple heart and narrow chest had swelled with fatherly pride on reading that—and this summer he was in the Adirondacks, "having the time of my life; thanks to your liberality, dear old dad. I'll square the account when I'm through college, never fear."

"Ah," murmured Diggs, with moist eyes, "if only his mother were alive he'd have a real home to come to. I can't expect him to find much pleasure in spending his time with a slow old coach like myself."

The figures showed clearly that Diggs' vacation must be an inexpensive one. Where should he go? There was Addington's—the very thing! Addington, old chum and schoolmate, had urged him last year to come.

"I get two weeks off," he had written. "Come, old boy, and help me to enjoy it—we haven't seen each other for years. I shan't go away;

can't afford that, and our youngest boy is not quite well. I'll hire an old rig, and we'll drive to the river, five miles, every morning, and return at night, so that we'll have good meals and comfortable beds. The bass are biting, and the squirrels are plentiful and audacious. Come, Diggsy; it sha'n't cost you a cent but your fare."

Diggs hadn't gone then, but he'd go now; surely Addington could get off for one week, at least. Visions of great, glistening bass rising from cool, swirling waters, of succulent, bushy-tailed squirrels gamboling in leafy tree-tops, inspired Diggs to whistle softly but merrily as he prepared his usual evening meal over the diminutive oil stove.

At noon of the next day, grip-laden and smiling, he rapped gently at the front door of Addington's modest cottage, and was ushered into a darkened room, where his old schoolmate lay in a Morris chair.

"Diggsy! Is it really you, at last, old chum?" Addington cried feebly, holding out two thin and trembling hands.

"You—you're ill?" exclaimed Diggs, solicitously.

"Only a little touch of nervous prostration. It won't last long. Doc says that if I keep quiet and obey orders I can go back to work in two weeks."

"If there's any work to go back to," added little Mrs. Addington dolefully, as she smoothed the invalid's pillow.

"Now, dear, don't bother Diggs with our troubles," Addington protested. "He probably has some of his own."

"Discharged?" asked Diggs.

"Not just that," Addington replied. "But they've notified me, with regrets, that they'll be compelled to fill my place."

"And won't take you back—when you've been with them so long?" Diggs queried, with indignation in the rising inflection.

"I suspect not—if the new man should suit. Business is business, you know, Diggs. It will be hard for me to find another place," Addington answered, closing his eyes wearily.

"N—no—not this time, Addington," Diggs stammered. "Little business trip. Just dropped off—between trains—to shake hands. I must be going."

For many days afterwards Diggs marveled that his brain had happened to hatch that reply, and that his tongue had consented to utter it. For many nights that gracious lie



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"I fear I shall have to ask for a short vacation."

"There! Oh, dear me! I just knew you were talking too much!" whimpered little Mrs. Addington, fussing around the pillow.

"You'll excuse me, won't you, Diggsy?" murmured Addington, with a feeble smile. "Doctor's orders. Awfully sorry. You've come to stay awhile, of course. Mary will take your grips, and——"

chafed his sensitive conscience. But Diggs' intellect, dulled for many years because of no more strenuous exercise than the calculation of so many yards of silk at "so much per," had suddenly sparkled, flared up, and evolved a brilliant scheme, which Diggs proceeded to execute as soon as he left Addington.

"Yes, sir," answered Mr. Dormer

of "The Mart of Commerce," "we do happen to have a vacancy—at the silk counter. Can you fill it?"

"I can answer that question better from behind the silk counter, sir," Mr. Diggs replied confidently, amazed at his own audacity in daring to proffer his services to another house than the "Bazaar."

"Then get behind it at once,"

chafe if he should hear that Mr. J. T. Diggs had assumed control of the silk counter of "The Mart of Commerce."

So Diggs sold silks—and sold them satisfactorily, too—through all those sweltering days, and tossed feverishly in a strange bed of nights, never going near Addington, but managing to keep in-



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"Is it really you, at last, old chum?"

said Mr. Dormer, brusquely. "We'll try you. Mr. Addington—a very excellent salesman—has been taken ill. Too bad—but we're short-handed and can't wait. If you suit, the position will be permanent. Let me have your name again, please."

"Thom — Thomas — James Thomas," faltered Mr. Diggs, almost choking. Another lie!—but Addington would understand and fret and

formed of his steady improvement.

Then, one morning, he saw his old friend, pale but alert, enter the office of "The Mart of Commerce," and shortly reappear and depart with bowed head and knitted brows. Mr. Diggs immediately excused himself to the indignant, stiff-backed woman who had clawed over a dozen bolts of silk with no intention of buying, and entered the office.



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"Your services are quite satisfactory."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Dormer," he said, "but may I ask if Mr. Addington has applied for his former position?"

"He has, Mr. Thomas; but, as your services are quite satisfactory, we cannot——"

"I think you'd better take him," interrupted Diggs, nervously backing toward the door. "Fact is, Mr. Dormer, I'm compelled to leave you—most urgent affairs at home—going immediately—can't return. Sorry. Good-day, Mr. Dormer."

"Oh, by the way," he added, thrusting his little bald head through the door, and beaming cheerfully on the open-mouthed Dormer, "my

salary! Haven't drawn any yet, you know. Just credit it to Mr. Addington's account, and tell him that I, James Thomas Diggs, so ordered. Thank you, Mr. Dormer."

"On time, I see, Diggs," growled Mr. Billings next morning, as Diggs wearily arranged the silks on his old counter. "Have a good time?"

"Never had such a time in my life, Mr. Billings, thank you."

"Hope it'll brighten you up a bit. You don't seem to have tanned much, Diggs."

"No, sir. Nice shady place where I was, Mr. Billings—and no mosquitoes. Silks, ma'am? Yes, ma'am. This way, if you please, ma'am."



DRAWN BY LEO H. JUNKER

Apple Blossoms and Other Things

BY GRACE G. BOSTWICK

I looked all about me in the warm, sunshiny orchard, dew-starred and flecked with shade. Everywhere the soothing drone of bees and the merry house-keeping of birds, but no trace of her—no sign of the Naughty One. I stood directly under a big tree that dripped apple-blossoms in a continuous pink-and-white mist.

I sighed, then started as an answering echo reached me. I sighed again and this time the echo was almost a sob. I looked up and there, above me in her frame of green and white, she sat, little pink petals crowning her soft brown hair lovingly. They flowed over onto her straight young shoulders and down across her breast in nature's own unstudied grace and her two soft eyes, brown and repentant and lovely, shone into my ugly gray ones.

"'Ye jist cross that thar patch of burdicks an' go on backutty till ye smell them thar trees, an' she ain't fur off.'"

The Naughty One laughed. "She's a dear, motherly, old soul, anyway, but she promised she'd never tell you where I was."

"Ah! Then you expected me?" Affairs lost their desperate aspect.

"No, I didn't," she protested indignantly, "I never dreamed of such a thing as your coming out here."

I smiled, but to myself, be it known. "You're a dream up there, but I'd like you better down," I ventured carefully, gazing meanwhile at a small, a very small, pair of white slippers. I have a weakness for white slippers, and she knows it, but she quickly drew them under her and covered them with snowdrifts. I have a weakness for snowdrifts also, but I dare not own it.

"How can I come down?" Her voice was a bit pettish, which I couldn't understand, of course, being a man.

"Why, the way you got up—climb—or did the fairies materialize and lend you their assistance? You look tempting enough to materialize anything."

"It isn't climbing when you get down."

"Oh, I stand corrected."

She made no move. I still gazed. What were eyes made for if not for gazing when opportunity occurs?

"I'll come down if you'll go to that path and turn your back." Her tone was stern, final.

"Anything, anything," I declared humbly, "I'll lie flat on my back and stand on my head, if it please your ladyship."

She tittered. I slowly receded, looking furtively back, and I saw a white cloud shake itself out and quickly drop. I can't see, for my part, how she did it. Not even so much as the flash of a silken stocking.

I stood silent, lost in the realization of my sinfulness. She coughed. I turned partially, "Curtain up?" I asked.

"No, Goosey, it's down," then as I laughed, she flushed like the baby-blossoms. "It was up when I was in the tree," she explained carefully. "This is behind the scenes."

I advanced gingerly, looking cautiously all about.

"I can't see them," I declared.

"See *them*. See what?"

"The stars you stole the sparkle from to light your dreamy eyes," I quoted prettily. (No one need know I was quoting myself. Can one not use a good thing more than once?)

She smiled at my approval, a delicious, demure, alluring smile, and I threw back my shoulders in sudden pride.

"Ah, this is Paradise," I murmured as I sank into the softness of

deep grass embroidered with blossoms.

"Leave the snake out," she shuddered and drew her skirts delicately about her, "and I'll co-wiesce." We both laughed. It's second nature to laugh in an orchard with—with—when one isn't alone.

I've often thought Adam and Eve must have had a jolly time of it, for the novelty of the situation is lost to us and we manage to get along pretty well, notwithstanding.

"What'd you come here for, I'd like to know; spoiling all my fun?" She wrinkled her pretty brows into a terrifying scowl.

"I came for you," I replied meekly, cowed into submissiveness.

"For me?" in amazed surprise. "Why, what in the world! What business have you streaking all over the country after me?"

"None at all, your ladyship," I whimpered.

She softened. I felt for her hand. Sometimes it takes a deal of time when it's lost in the grass. Ever hunt for anything in the grass—the long, bright-green orchard grass? Then you know how it is. I got it at last and drew a breath of relief. Some way, I never feel sure of any thing until I can hold onto it fast—like that.

Then I felt brave and changed my position a trifle.

"O, sit still, Fidget," she said crossly.



DRAWN BY LEO H. JUNKER



DRAWN BY LEO H. JUNKER

"Cross-patch, draw the latch, sit by the fire and spin," I croaked, boy-fashion, and her red mouth relaxed into a smile.

After awhile, I got her to talking. She talks beautifully, if you don't interrupt—all about birds and flowers and souls and things, particularly things.

"I'd like," she murmured dreamily, "I'd like to live here always."

"With me," I interpolated, foolishly, as the consequences proved. She ignored me coldly. "Always," she continued, "with this blue sky over me and the birds and the flowers and the bees for company."

"Oh, come now," I objected a trifle touchily. She need not rub it in like that. "But," a happy thought struck me, "the blossoms are here only a few days at the most and after awhile the apples fall and hit one on the nose." She laughed. "And then the trees get bare and gray and the cold comes and spins a winding-sheet around them," I continued poetically (I've always thought that a great poet was lost to the world when I went into the law), "and freezes all this into submission." I waved my hand suggestively.

She sighed. "It's just like all the

good things," she philosophized, "they only last a few days and then—" she shuddered.

I managed to lessen the distance between us. It was no great feat. "I don't," I murmured. I meant to do it tenderly but my voice cracked wretchedly. It always does when I grow sentimental—confound it! She giggled again delightedly. I sat up very straight. I even loosed my clasp of her hand. Her little fingers turned and twined about mine. I tried to look stern. I drew my mouth down and thrust my chin out like the fellows in the Christy pictures. I think it's quite fetching, myself.

"Oh, Ted," she chimed, gay with merriment, "don't try to look dignified. Fancy a man with a wart on his nose, affecting dignity."

I must own to the corn, or the wart. (It was that prevented my becoming a poet.) But really, it's very small. I'd never notice it myself, unless it was mentioned.

She put one hand softly on my cheek. "Did I hurt its feelin's?" she cooed tenderly, bending with her face beneath mine, temptingly close. There was a pause.

"I didn't mean *that*," she said hotly, a bit fluttered as I could see.

"O, *didn't* you?" I replied stolidly. "Well I just did. You can't twit me with my failings without paying the price."

She was flushed quite a little and she kept her eyes down. Some way, when she does that I always have an irresistible longing to look into their depths, their clear, unfathomable, haunting depths. I suddenly grew bold. I put my arms around her and drew her close. She must have felt the thumping of my heart—unruly thing! Why is it no one can ever control that organ?

"Let's play"—I whispered some magic words in her ear—"Let's just play." She nestled down contentedly. "Well, just for a minute—and its *just* play. You won't remind me of it and be horrid—afterwards?"

"Never," I swore innocently. "It's just play."

"You're a nice old bear, after all," she murmured, against my shoulder. Then I got the look I hungered for and more—ah, yes, much more, bless her!

"But we must go," she started up all too soon. "This can't go on forever." I thought there was a wistful note in her voice.

"Why can't it?" I demanded lumberingly.

"Why? Oh, because there are things to do and—one must eat," she said lightly, shaking the snow-

drifts about her. "I'm hungry as a bear at this very moment," she declared.

I rose—not very eagerly I'll confess. "Well, if one must, I suppose one must," I grumbled.

"Now, be a good boy and don't be grouchy any more," she entreated, slipping her hand in my arm.

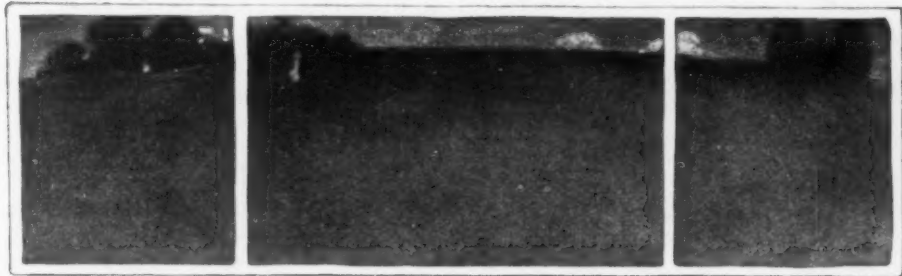
"Grouchy! After this?" I reproached her with my eyes. "Naughty One, am I ever grouchy?"

As we sauntered to the house through the backutty path, the dear, motherly, old soul called to us from the porch, "Come folks, come in to dinner right away. Land sakes alive!" she exclaimed as she caught sight of our faces, "if ye ain't gone an' bin at it again. Sech a pair of billin' turtle-doves I never set eyes on, an' you old married folks this four year past. My goodness!"

Four years? We gazed at each other in astonishment. "It can't be," she declared.

"I hope you scolded her right good an' smart fer her foolishness, a shyin' off up here becuz you fergot to say 'good-mornin'' or somethin' like that. I never heern tell of sich crazy doin's as you two be up to," and she beamed on us in gracious disapproval.

I glanced at the Naughty One for support—weakly—like a man, and she smiled back gaily into my eyes.



DRAWN BY LEO H. JUNKER



Latimer's Past

BY UNA HUDSON



This is the intimate and veracious narrative of a man with a past. The past may or may not have been hereditary; as to that I am not prepared to state; but considering the very immature age at which it began to assert itself, I think I may safely affirm that he was born with it.

When I first made his acquaintance he was wearing curls and dresses. Having myself attained to the dignity of a shorn head and trousers, I was inclined to regard him very much as does a big dog a little one.

It is possible that he detected my air of patronizing toleration, and resented it, for he stuck out his chest like an absurd and overgrown pouter pigeon, and demanded, "Did you ever kill a giant?"

I was forced to admit, somewhat reluctantly, that I never did.

"Well, I did," he boasted. "A giant and a nogre and two little nogres."

I was greatly impressed, but my dignity demanded that I should not show it.

"You mean an ogre," I suggested in a very superior tone of voice.

"Of course," he said, cheerfully. "That's what I said—a nogre. Want me to tell you about it?"

"I don't mind," I said, with a careful assumption of indifference.

So he told me. And I am bound to say that his adventures with giants and ogres, and subsequent ruthless destruction of the same, made the performances of one Jack of beanstalk fame seem commonplace and tame by comparison.

When with increasing years he shed his curls and outgrew dresses and fairy tales, he slightly altered his past, and boasted much of the

killing of ferocious, four-footed creatures that lived in an all but impenetrable jungle.

From bears to Indians would, I thought, be a natural transition, but I failed to take into consideration a dreamy-eyed, golden-haired small person whom he was in the habit of escorting home from school. Walking behind them one afternoon, I overheard him telling her a marvelous tale of a maiden whom he had rescued from a terrifying dragon, said dragon being, I should judge from his description, a combination of prehistoric monster and the creation of an unusually lively nightmare.

I had heard a good many of Victor Latimer's tales, but I then and there decided that as a liar of lies he was entitled to precedence before all others, past, present or to come.

The dragon must have been too much for the golden-haired Muriel, for she shortly transferred her affections to a stolid, unimaginative boy who boldly declared that a dragon was a thing that did not exist and never had existed.

Victor sought and found favor in the eyes of a freckle-faced girl whom we derisively called "Tom-boy," and, being versatile, if not truthful, he imparted to her varied tales of his prowess as regarded things athletic. For a time she listened with a most flattering show of attention, then she requested somewhat insistently that Victor repeat some of his feats of strength. This he declined to do, on the ground that a fellow's past was not his present.

The freckle-faced girl intimated that a tangible present was preferable to an unreal past, and the re-

sulting coolness was such that even the glow of her red hair was powerless to raise the temperature.

Once or twice I heard of Victor Latimer while he was at college. His past, it appeared, still clung to him, or, to speak more accurately, he still clung to his past. My informant, a nice young fellow in his junior year, fairly sputtered with rage when speaking of Victor, and seemed quite at a loss for words wherewith to express himself fittingly, or unfittingly.

Victor's past, it seemed, now consisted wholly of a series of episodes of a more or less, generally more, sentimental nature. He carried a picture and a lock of hair in his watch, the junior said wrathfully, and he spoke freely and frequently of a broken heart, a ruined life and blasted hopes, presumably *his* heart, *his* life and *his* hopes. When he appeared in a drawing-room there was always a stampede of girls in his direction, and they fed him biscuits and sang tender songs to him, and waited upon him generally, and the other fellows were just nowhere.

I sympathized politely, but I did not realize the gravity of Latimer's offense until he happened to cross my path some three or four years later. Even I had to admit that he was passably good-looking, that is, if one fancies the *matinée-idol* type, and when he sighed and began to talk of his past it was just as that junior fellow had said—in five minutes he had every girl in the room waiting on him and trying to console him.

It was a neat little game, and no mistake. He could be fairly surfeited with feminine adulation without committing himself by so much as the lifting of an eyelash. For he always stated positively that his heart had been given irrevocably to

the girl in his watchcase, who did not return his affection. But he intimated (though that is really too strong a word, for he simply caused it to be felt in some subtle, indefinable way) that he was not averse to receiving such consolation as might come his way. And consolation came his way in carload lots. Maids, wives and widows handed it out by the bucketful. And we men stood by and ground our teeth in helpless rage.

But when I found Latimer taking tea with Dorothy Hastings, the picture in the watchcase and the lock of hair between them on the tea-table, I felt that the time had come for me to say something. I said it (after Latimer's departure), and Dorothy told me calmly that I was jealous. Which was the truth, though I denied it most vigorously.

For a whole year I had been on the verge of proposing to Dorothy Hastings, but somehow I never could quite nerve myself up to it. Now when I saw her, big-eyed and serious, listening to and believing the awful yarns Latimer told, I wanted her more than ever. With Dorothy for my wife, it wouldn't be necessary to invent new and plausible excuses to account for prolonged absences at unseemly hours. Any old thing would do, the first that came to hand. Not that I expected to develop into the come-home-at-three-in-the-morning husband of the funny papers, but then one never can tell what one is coming to, and it is quite as well to be prepared.

But much as I wanted Dorothy, I simply couldn't propose to her with that Latimer fellow forever hanging around, and she talked of him and the girl in his watchcase till she fairly set my teeth on edge.

He seemed to find Dorothy's sympathy particularly satisfying, which

was not at all strange, and managed to see her, at a conservative estimate, about once in twenty-four hours. Sometimes he brought her roses or carnations; violets, he explained, were sacred to the girl in the watch—they had been her favorite flower. That nettled me, and I left orders with the florist that violets—a lot of 'em—were to be sent to Dorothy every day, and I further stipulated that they were to be delivered about five in the afternoon, that being the time when Latimer might generally be found with Dorothy.

The violets were delivered—twice. Then I got a note from Dorothy thanking me but begging me to desist, because, if you please, I was wounding the sensibilities of Mr. Latimer.

I said an ugly word, several of them, in fact, but I desisted, and, furthermore, by the exercise of great self-control, I managed to stay away from Dorothy for two long weeks.

The two weeks seemed like two months, and on the fifteenth day I pocketed my pride, swallowed my resentment, and yielded to the longing to see Dorothy.

I found quite a party assembled around her tea-table. Latimer was there, as a matter of course, and Charlie Dwyer, who is a regular old woman for gossip, and three or four girls, all of whom were devoting themselves to Latimer.

Dorothy smiled amiably and gave me her hand, and in token that she bore me no malice for my temporary desertion, let me have all the sugar I wanted in my tea. Generally she restricts me to a single lump, and a small one at that, on the ground that more would be bad for me. Her solicitude for my welfare would be very flattering if I could believe it genuine, but unluckily I know she

withholds the second lump of sugar solely and only because she knows I detest tea not properly sweetened.

As usual, the picture in Latimer's watch was very much in evidence, and he seemed, I thought, to be making rather more of a parade than commonly of his devotion to the original. But that might be because of the artful sympathy and skilful questioning of the girls.

"But why," this from Dorothy, "if you loved her, didn't you tell her so?"

"Ah, my dear Miss Hastings, that was quite unnecessary." Latimer's sigh jarred the tea-cups. "I knew she cared nothing for me, so why trouble her by a knowledge of my love?"

"But," Dorothy persisted, "suppose she really *did* care for you?"

"Impossible," Latimer protested, with a despairing wave of his tea-cup. I quite agreed with him, but didn't say so. Dorothy probably wouldn't like it.

"But," said Dorothy, "if you should meet her again, and if you should learn that she really did love you——"

"Heaven itself could hold no greater joy for me than that moment," Latimer declared ecstatically.

"She is here," Dorothy said, with a dramatic wave of her hand toward the curtains that divided the parlor from the library.

I don't know just what we had expected, if indeed anything, but certainly we were not prepared for that. We were all of us fairly dumfounded, but it was worth money to see Latimer's face when he turned and saw the tall blonde girl standing between the red velvet curtains.

She came forward with both hands outstretched and with eyes for no one but Latimer. For a brief mo-

ment I think he meditated flight. I read it in his eye, and under pretense of relieving him of his cup and saucer I barred the way. The girl was close beside him now, and in sheer desperation he seized her hand and worked it up and down like a pump handle.

"De-delighted," he stammered inanely. "Delighted, I'm sure. So—so unexpected, you know."

I felt that if I stayed there another moment it would be a physical impossibility to avoid giving vent to the joy that possessed my soul, and I retreated precipitately to the hall. The others, probably actuated by a commendable desire to leave the lovers alone together, followed me immediately.

Charlie Dwyer, well-nigh bursting with importance and news, made hasty adieux.

"He will tell everybody he knows," Dorothy remarked complacently, as the door closed after him.

"So romantic, isn't it?" cooed one of the girls delightedly. "And how cleverly you managed it! I'm quite sure he had not the faintest idea of the surprise that was in store for him when he came here this afternoon."

I entirely agreed with her, and I felt reasonably sure that, had he had an inkling of it, he would certainly have stayed away.

"You see," Dorothy explained happily, "I've known Marion for years, and when I saw her picture in his watch I recognized it at once. I only waited to make *quite* sure that he cared for her before I sent for her. And did you see her face when she came into the room this afternoon? Wasn't it just beautiful?"

"I suppose," said the other girl, "she heard all he had been saying about her."

"Of course," Dorothy said in a

matter-of-fact voice, "I arranged it so on purpose."

Dorothy beamed on me when the others had gone, and took me completely into her confidence. "Poor Mr. Latimer," she said, "I've been so sorry for him; and it's so delightful to think that I've been the means of making him happy."

Latimer's face, when that girl came through the red curtains, had, I thought, mirrored pretty much every emotion *except* joy, but it seemed brutal to call Dorothy's attention to that fact, for she had meant well, and indeed had done well, much better than she knew, in fact.

"I dearly love to make people happy," Dorothy said, tiptoeing over to the parlor door. "Oh, would it be *very* dreadful to look through the key-hole, just one little teeny look?"

"*Very* dreadful, indeed," I said, severely, for I had an idea that there would be more fun at Latimer's expense if Dorothy remained in her present state of blissful ignorance.

"Please," Dorothy begged, after the manner of an adorable child.

But I hardened my heart. "No," I said firmly. "It wouldn't be exactly honorable," I explained virtuously. And Dorothy hung her head and looked at me from under long lashes and said, "Oh."

Dorothy is small and has a baby face, and kittenish ways become her. "Well," she said, "if you really *won't* let me look through the key-hole, I think you might at least tell me what I may do."

"Um," I said, "let me think a moment. How would you like to make somebody else happy?"

"Oh, I'd just love to," Dorothy said with quick enthusiasm. "Who is the 'somebody'?"

"Please," I said, meekly, and ungrammatically, "it's me."

Dorothy cast down her lashes and blushed daintily. When Dorothy is demure she is simply irresistible. "I'm not sure," said she teasingly, "that I can, that I know how."

"I'll tell you," I said boldly. "You've only to say, 'Sidney, I love you.'"

"Oh," Dorothy demurred, "I'm afraid I—I can't."

But her protest was only half-hearted, as I could plainly see. "Sweetheart, say it," I begged. And she said it, but so low that I had to bend my head to catch the words.

It was astonishing how everybody who knew him rejoiced in the happy culmination of Victor Latimer's romance; the women, because they seemed to have honestly believed his preposterous stories, and the men, because now at last he bade fair to get all that had been coming to him for a good many years.

I think he would have fled the place if he could, but, unfortunately, his bread and butter depended upon his remaining. As it was, he and Marion Talbot couldn't turn around without being wined and dined and fêted, and their entertainers went to no end of trouble to provide half-lighted cosy-corners for them, and secluded seats in conservatories; while the people who possessed neither cosy-corners nor conservatories quite openly and unblushingly inveigled them into dens or libraries and left them alone together.

Latimer bore up pretty well, all things considered, though his eyes began to have the look of a hunted thing, and he developed an uncomfortable habit of jumping nervously at a sudden noise. I couldn't help wondering sometimes if he'd have the nerve to carry his bluff through and marry the girl. I didn't see how he could very well decently get out of it.

But whether he intended to marry her or not, I couldn't but feel sorry for Marion. She was an uncommonly nice girl, and, I thought, deserved something better of fate than to be the bride of an unwilling husband.

Things ran on for about a month, Latimer growing plainly more unquiet every day, and Marion blushing and smiling and dimpling whenever his name was mentioned.

Badly as he had behaved, I could almost find it in my heart to pity Latimer. Now that Dorothy was promised to me, and I knew that she had never cared two straws for him anyway, I felt that I could afford to be generous. But I was very far from guessing that he would come to me to help him out of his dilemma. Perhaps he thought that as Dorothy had gotten him into the scrape, poetic justice demanded that I should help him out.

He was painfully embarrassed, and no wonder. When everybody supposes you engaged to a certain lady it's decidedly awkward to be obliged to confess that in reality you intend to marry an entirely different person.

I'm afraid I proved rather a Job's comforter. So far as I could see, Latimer would have to break with one of the girls—either the one he wanted to marry, or the one who wanted to marry him—he could have his choice, if that was any comfort to him—and I told him so. Then, as he didn't seem conspicuously enthusiastic at the prospect, I suggested that, if the ladies were willing, he might turn Mormon and make them both happy.

He gave me one long, reproachful look and simply groaned. I didn't blame him, for while I know but little about women, yet to make one's self responsible for the happi-

ness of two of them did seem like rather a large undertaking. And then the bills for hats and gowns! No, clearly a fellow with Latimer's income couldn't afford two wives.

We talked it over at some length, and finally Latimer decided to stick to the girl he wanted to marry. It's hardly necessary to state that she didn't live in our town; in that case she wouldn't have wanted to marry Latimer.

And though I didn't think that Latimer deserved to be let down easy, I consented to go to Dorothy and explain matters to her, and ask her to speak to Marion. I had a bad quarter of an hour with Dorothy, who had, I imagine, a worse quarter of an hour with Marion; and then it was passed up to Latimer, who had, I verily believe, the very worst quarter of an hour that ever fell to the lot of mortal man.

For Marion refused absolutely and entirely to believe that Latimer wanted to marry any girl save and except herself. She told Dorothy flatly that she would believe it only when she heard it from Latimer's own lips. Her faith in the man she believed her lover was beautiful, and it was a thousand pities it should be so sadly misplaced.

After his final interview with Marion, Latimer came to me. "Hallowell," said he, "I feel as if I'd killed that girl's soul, and, let me tell you, it's a much bigger crime to kill a soul than to murder a body. I—I don't want to talk about it. But never, as you value your peace of mind, pretend to love a girl when you don't."

"I'm not likely to," I said and smiled, for I was thinking of Dorothy.

Latimer got a job in Honolulu, and took his bride there. I thought he showed remarkably good sense in

getting as far away as he possibly could. There wasn't one chance in a thousand that, once safely established in her new home, Mrs. Latimer would ever hear of her husband's affair with Marion Talbot.

That unfortunate young lady brought her visit to an abrupt close, and it was a positive relief to me to see her go. It's depressing to be in close proximity to a broken heart—when it's the real thing.

She hadn't been gone more than two weeks when Dorothy suddenly announced her intention of returning Marion's visit.

"She's going to be married," she explained calmly, "and I'm to be maid of honor."

"Great heavens!" I said. "It didn't take her long to mend her broken heart."

"Who said anything about a broken heart, I would like to know?" Dorothy demanded stiffly. "Certainly Marion did not, nor did I."

"Of course not," I agreed hastily. "But—er—that little affair with Latimer—"

"As if," said Dorothy, her nose in air, "a girl would break her heart over Victor Latimer."

"Well, anyway," I said, "it's rather sudden, isn't it?"

"It all depends," said Dorothy, "on what you mean by 'sudden.' They've been engaged for two years. Marion was buying her trousseau when she was here."

"Dorothy," I gasped, "was it a put-up job?"

"Did you suppose," said Dorothy with fine scorn, "that Victor Latimer for one moment imposed on *me*? I wrote Marion about him as soon as ever I saw the picture in his watch—it was just a little kodak one—he snap-shotted her one day at a picnic. And that lock of hair he was showing wasn't Marion's hair; if you'd

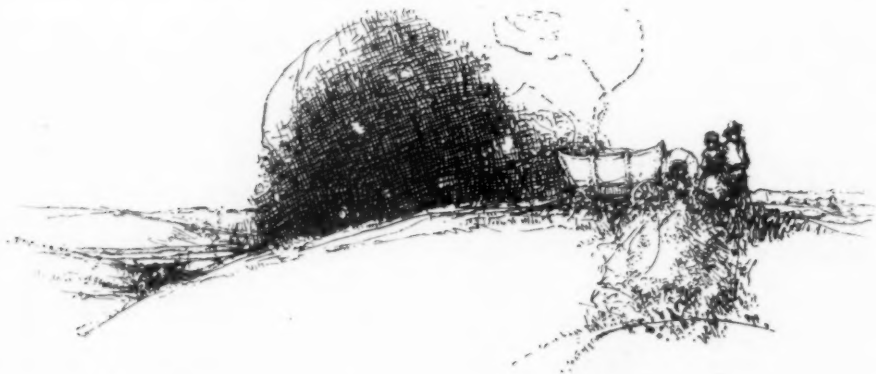
taken the trouble to examine it closely you'd have found that it was at least three shades darker than Marion's. Marion answered my letter the very day she got it, and told me about the picture he had in his watch the summer she knew him. It wasn't *her* picture then, you may be sure. So we decided to give him a lesson, and," complacently, "I think we succeeded."

And this was my guileless, innocent little Dorothy! I hastily de-

cided that the "sick friend" story, or any other old yarn, wouldn't go with her. In fact, I very much doubted if I could cook up a story that would go. Well, I never approved of men deceiving their wives anyway.

"And that isn't all," said Dorothy. "Marion and Fred are going to Honolulu on their wedding journey."

"Good heavens!" I ejaculated. It was painfully inadequate, but it was the best that I could do.



A Daughter of Romany-

by Jean Elginbrod —

Warner stalked restlessly back and forth, his face growing darker and darker. He was making a fool of himself over this witch of a gipsy. Already he had been there a half day, and for what? His fishing pole lay idle. His book lay closed, on the bank.

He laughed a little angrily. What a level-headed junior partner Felton had, to be sure! It was fortunate Felton could not see him now, waiting off in this country wilderness for the chance passing of a gipsy girl whom he had seen but three times.

He had happened upon their encampment of wagons and horses four days before, as he was rowing slowly up the channel. They were gathered about an open fire, where a huge kettle was boiling, in a clearing on the bank. They were evidently prosperous. The wide hats of the men and the bright handkerchiefs of the women were new and clean. There were four or five men and as many women. All seemed young; one or two were rather fair. The wagons were large, solid affairs with the usual canvas covers; one, he

could see, was hung with pans and kettles.

He had watched them, leaning idly on his oar. They certainly were a curious looking crowd, a sort of Americanized gipsies with a veneering of refinement and education that yet had not destroyed their typical airs and tastes. But he was out for a week's fishing, not to watch a lot of nomads, so he rowed quietly away. Higher up stream, he fastened his boat and settled himself contentedly for a morning's sport.

Then he saw her. She was sitting up on the bank, her feet crossed under her short skirt, her arms bare and brown to the elbow, her eyes, black as night, watching him intently. The brilliant kerchief upon her head scarce hid the waves of dusky hair. The clear olive of her skin and the scarlet thread of her lips fascinated him. He forgot that he had come to fish; forgot that he was a cool-headed business man of thirty with not a tinge of romance in him; forgot that he was staring, and lost himself in her somber eyes.

Then, in an instant, she was gone; gone like a bird that goes so quickly you scarce get a flash of its wing.

Almost involuntarily he followed her a little way, but she was out of sight in the thick growth of cedars and pines. He ate his dinner there by the still stream, alert for sign of her return, eager as a boy, more eager than he could remember ever having been before for a second sight of a woman's face. But she did not come back.

He had hurried to that same spot the next day, had seen her, had spoken with her. And the next day also. She had told his fortune in her soft, hesitating speech, had answered shyly some of his rapid fire of questions, had even asked some of him in turn. Then she was

gone again, almost before he knew it.

But to-day he had not seen her, although she knew he would be waiting. He had told her he would wait—all day, if necessary. She was laughing at him, off somewhere with her gipsy kin.

Then he heard a faint tinkle, a quick beat of a tambourine, and she came dancing down the narrow, grassy path, a slight, childish figure in the short pleated skirt, the brilliant kerchief fallen from her hair, her little dark face full of mischief, the tambourine high above her head.

She stopped before him and courtesied low, so low that he grew angry, lest she be mocking him. But her face was serious, even troubled when she looked at him.

"The signor waits?" she asked softly.

Warner laughed, shortly. "You know why," he said.

A little dimple came into one cheek, but she shook her head.

"The signor flatters," she said.

Then she touched his arm. "You must not stay here. You must go quickly."

"Go?" he repeated, bewildered.

She nodded. "Some at the house of me they have seen you," she said in her odd speech. "They like it not."

"Why should you not talk with me? This is a free country. Has any one the right to forbid it?"

"My mother forbids," she said seriously, "and my brothers. There is no one else the right."

"Then come, talk with me. I am no bogie man. I will not hurt you."

"Of what shall I tell the signor? Of a land beyond the waters where hills are high and green, and the speech strange, and one wanders for moons seeing only the smoke of open fires, and the warm faces of one's own people?" Her lip quivered

like a child's. "I like it not, to talk of it," she said with dignity.

Then her mood changed. "Shall I dance for you?" she said.

Without waiting for an answer, she wayed lightly like a bit of thistle-down before him, to the beat of her tambourine. Now slow, now fast, bending toward him, away from him, the click of her tiny shoes muffled in the grass, until her beautiful face shone out from her loosened hair like a flower out of a mist. Then she threw him a kiss and danced slowly away from him, the tambourine high above her head, her eyes like stars.

She was almost out of his sight before he realized that she was leaving him. What if he should never see her again? He sprang after her. She sped ahead like a deer, but she had not reached the edge of the wood before he had caught her.

He held her brown hands in an iron grasp, noticing even then, with surprise, how exquisitely kept they were.

"They will see you. Let me go," she demanded. "Ah, if they see you!"

"Then tell me you will surely come again. I cannot let you go like this. You will come here again—to-morrow?"

She shook her head, tugging frantically at her wrists.

"No, no. They will see us, and kill you, or beat you as they do me sometimes—my brothers."

"Beat you? They beat you!"

"Ah, ask me not. Sometimes."

The thought of it drove the last bit of caution and reason out of his head. "Then come with me, Persis. Marry me, now, to-day. I will take you home to my mother. I will be so good to you. I have money enough to make you happy. You shall do as you please. No more of

this wandering, unhappy life. Oh, Persis, you don't know me, I know, but, indeed, I speak the truth to you. Come, Persis."

She looked at him strangely. "You would marry me, a gipsy, poor, ignorant, friendless?"

"Marry you, yes. Now, to-day. You have taken my heart away from me. I never knew anything like this—oh, Persis!"

He loosened her wrists, and held out his arms, his soul in his face, as no one in his stern, busy life had ever seen it before. For an instant she hesitated. Then she leaned forward within his reach, and he took her up bodily, and held her close, close.

"Do you mean 'yes'? Will you come now?"

"To-morrow," she said softly.

She lifted her face, and he kissed her gently. "My gipsy witch," he said, and released her. "To-morrow, then. Early, early. I shall be waiting here."

She nodded silently. Then she was gone, and he stood alone. Had he lost his senses, in two days? Felton would say he had. He thought vaguely of his friends. What would they say, or think? His mother, what would she do? Then he laughed happily. His mother would not care, so long as he was happy. Why, his eighteen hundred a year would seem a fortune to Persis. If he could only make her happy! She should live outdoors just as far as he could make it possible. She should not be caged. She should be happy in her own way; her way should be his way.

When a man's life has been unusually rigid and severe, so much the more easily is he swept from his feet when the time comes. And the time always comes, once, boldly, sweeping all traditions before it.



DRAWN BY HARRY E. TOWNSEND

“He forgot that he had come to fish.”

So he dreamed, dreamed happily, until noon of the next day, when he grew anxious, suspicious. Had she not meant to come? Perhaps she did not believe him, perhaps she was afraid. Perhaps they were keeping her. He lay on the bank in the shadow, and watched, and waited. He wore himself out with his fears. At last he could stand it no longer, and started for the encampment.

It was late in the afternoon. A little brown thrush sang softly in the thicket. Once a rabbit crossed his path, stopped midway and looked at him, then scurried out of sight. A tiny snake sunned itself in a warm open space. He could smell the wintergreen down in the marshy hollow where the slopes met.

There was no sound as he neared the clearing. He could see wagon-ruts, fresh ones; the grass was trampled by the roadside. All was desolation. A pile of ashes showed their fireplace, yet warm, but the merry crowd were gone.

For an instant he was half stunned, then his face grew hard. If they had taken her away, he would find her. If she had gone of herself—well—he would know. He studied the tracks as well as a city-bred man might. Then with dogged face he started on his journey.

That night he slept in a barn; at least, he lay in one. He bought breakfast at a farm house, and learned that they could not be far ahead, unless they had traveled all night, which was not probable. He tried to obtain a horse, but there was none to be had there, and he would not waste time going back for one. He cursed his stupidity in not getting one at the start.

Some of his natural stubbornness got the lead in him. His lips shut like a vise, although his feet were aching desperately, and the hot sun

on the dusty road blinded him. At noon he reached a small summer resort on the shore, and lost all trace of them. He made inquiries at the only two stores in the place, and of innumerable small urchins. It was like beating his head against a stone wall. Discouraged, heart-sick, he crept into a bed at the small hotel and slept all the afternoon like a dead man.

It was growing dusk when he awoke. He dragged his stiffened limbs to the one window, and looked out. An orchestra was playing not far away. Evidently a dance was in progress. Japanese lanterns were alight off in the distance. Groups of girls in filmy gowns passed and repassed on the broad board walk. He dressed hastily and went down. If he could learn nothing here, he would get a horse in the morning and start out afresh. Somehow, somewhere, he would surely get trace of them again. They were too large a company to go unnoticed. For to-night he could do nothing more.

Just then some one spoke to him. "Why, Mr. Warner, you of all people! How does this happen?" He turned quickly. It was Felton's sister. He had been best man at her wedding the year before.

"Oh, just off on a fishing trip and struck here accidentally this afternoon. What's going on?"

"A hop. Do come and I will introduce you to all the pretty girls."

He smiled and looked down at himself. "Yes, I look like it, don't I? Thanks, but I guess not."

"Well, come anyway, and peek in the window at them. I will see that no one harms you."

Half unwillingly, he let himself follow her up the crowded steps to the big, open windows. He listened absently to the music. Oh, for the

beat of a tambourine! He scarcely saw the airs and graces and dainty costumes within. Oh, for a short pleated skirt, and a scarlet kerchief on a dusky head!

Mrs. Drew called back his wandering wits. "Do look over in that corner. See, isn't she lovely. She's Mr. Farist's daughter. Goodness, he owns half of the towns this side of the shore. She's just the apple of his eye. She's been up to a great lark. Just returned to-day, I believe. They have kept it pretty quiet so reporters wouldn't dog their steps. A whole party of them, with two aunts for chaperons, have been off traveling for a week in big covered wagons, just like gipsies. They say she made a picture in her costume. Well, she's tanned up enough. Don't you see her, with that tall, light-haired fellow? He was one of the party, I believe."

Then he saw her. She had no tambourine. Her hair was piled high upon her royal little head. Her dress of black net trailed at her feet; some scarlet flowers lay on her breast.

It was like a blow in the face. He thought of the instant he had held her in his arms, thought of the miles he had tramped, his heart a lump of lead in his throat; thought of his paltry eighteen hundred a year; thought of his plans and dreams, and laughed.

"Fool!" he said. "Fool!"

Perhaps his eyes drew her. She looked suddenly, and saw him. His eyes were blazing, but his face was white and miserable. Deep down, under his anger and humiliation,



DRAWN BY HARRY E. TOWNSEND

"I should not have done as I did."

something hurt cruelly. Then she was off again in the whirl of the dance.

With a muttered apology to Mrs. Drew, he stumbled down the steps, his only thought to get away. But the crowd about the house was dense. He had barely fought his way clear and started off at a swinging pace when some one spoke at his side, petulantly like a child.

"What makes you walk so fast? I can't run in this long skirt."

He stopped short and faced her.

She would not look at him, but began rapidly, yet defiantly.

"I want to explain," she said.

"You see," half ashamed, "I know Mrs. Drew well, and Felton, and knew all about you from them, had seen your picture even, so when I saw you that day I knew you in a minute. I should not have done as I did—told you such lies. I know it was wrong, but somehow the mis-

chief of it got into my blood. I know that's no excuse, and I am sorry, truly. Will you forgive me?"

"There, never mind," he said unsteadily, "only, didn't you know I would follow you?"

She nodded.

"I hoped so," she said softly. "If you cared enough to—follow—to hunt for—me, then—why, I would know—how much you—really—meant of—all you said. Though I didn't think you would come so soon." She laughed tremulously. The crowd surged by them on either side. He saw only her face, crimson under the tan.

"Do you mean that you are glad I followed you," he whispered, "and that you will keep your word to me—some day?"

After an instant she raised her head bravely and their eyes met.

"Yes," she said, "I meant that.





An Editorial Revision

BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD



It seemed often to Graham that when Antony Dewar left a room he purposely left some of his personality behind him. The artist had a trick of compelling people to quote him upon his exit, and Graham, therefore, was more or less prepared for Miss Roy's question after Dewar had gone out of the girl's studio.

"Do you think what Antony says is true, Norman?" she asked. "Perhaps he doesn't understand New York art critics. He has been in Paris for so long——"

"Oh, I don't know," said Graham, helping himself to a slice of lemon. "You see, Carlotta, the situation here among the art writers is extraordinary. Leverett is so many cubits above everyone else that——" He waved his tea-cup at the newspapers on the table. "Naturally, the small fry won't speak until Leverett has spoken. He's the king."

Miss Roy lifted her chin. "You say that," she asserted, "because Leverett writes for your paper."

"The *Courier* pays him enough," rejoined Graham. "Pays him so well, in fact, that Leverett is off for a vacation on the Mediterranean to-morrow morning."

"What?" murmured Miss Roy blankly. "Will he go without writing a word about my pictures?"

The young newspaper man shook his head. "We're holding a column for Leverett's last article to-night," he said. "It's to be about Dewar and you and the other Dewarites—the exhibition at the Beckmond Gallery."

"Ah!" sighed Carlotta. "Until

to-morrow! Suspense isn't pleasant, is it?"

She rose and walked slowly to the broad window seat. Miss Roy was tall, and her face was the classic face of a tall woman. She was dressed, somewhat severely, in gray, but the dusk of the street behind the glass set off the frankly perfect lines of her figure. Graham replaced his cup on the table. The studio was singularly bare of furniture. Carlotta had returned from Paris to America only a fortnight since. Graham followed her to the window seat and balanced one knee on the cushion.

"What do you know about suspense?" said he. "Suspense! Think of the suspense during the last two years of Norman Graham, talented sub-deputy-assistant editor of the *Courier*!"

"Not quite two years," she corrected gently. "Two years was the bargain I made with myself."

"And with me, Carlotta?"

She looked away.

"I know I am breaking the bargain by speaking of it," he pursued, frowning at the street lights, "but I can't help that, dear. I want you to listen to my love, now. You have given yourself to your art for the time you set and I believe in all honesty and kindness that you—that you have——" He sought the word.

"That I have failed, Norman?"

"That you have failed," he said doggedly. "Why, this fantastic, freakish style of painting which Dewar has deluded you into—those samples of it at the Beckmond Gallery, waiting for the critics—surely,

Carlotta, you can't hope that——"

"Wouldn't you better wait for King Leverett's opinion?" she interrupted, smiling wearily.

Sinclair slapped the crimson cushion. "London wouldn't stand the Dewar school," he said, "and Paris and Berlin wouldn't, and I can't believe that the New York critics under Leverett will decide differently."

He drummed on the window, and the girl's mouth tightened. "You are not very generous to my ambition, Norman," she said, after a pause.

"Oh, you must forgive me, dear," he begged, confronting her. "It's because I love you that your fruitless ambition hurts. It's because I need you so that I——"

"Wait," she broke in quietly. "You were right. You have broken the bargain by speaking of it before you ought. But I shall not break it in any way, Norman, you may depend on that. I shall listen to you, and answer you, after the time I set. If all the world says that I am wrong in dreaming I can paint for it—why—then——"

He moved towards her breathlessly, his eyes on fire.

"No, you must not," she protested and drew back. "You have not long to wait," she concluded brightly. "Our last hope is at the Beckmond."

"Our hope?"

"Antony Dewar's and mine."

Graham's brows contracted. "It's unpleasant to think of you always associated so intimately with that—with those people," he said lamely. His glance, however, said more, and a cloud of resentment drifted across Carlotta's face as he bade her good-night.

"And good luck with Leverett," added Graham, retaining her hand.

But the cloud still hung vexatiously between them.

Graham leaned back in his desk chair and balanced in his fingers the long blue envelope addressed to him in Leverett's aggressive hand. He was not an imperturbable young man, but his wiry, smooth-shaven countenance gave no sign as he slowly tore open the envelope and read the typewritten sheets with deliberate leisure. The *Courier's* weekly page of "Art and Letters," which was Graham's editorial charge, was well beyond the composing-room schedule.

He scanned moodily the formless mass of books and papers on his desk. Machinery clacked and grumbled, and far below him the dull roar of the streets maintained its fundamental bass. Through the sound Graham seemed to hear Carlotta's voice. It had trembled that afternoon when she spoke of her ambition, and none knew better than Graham how this ambition had woven itself into the very web of her heart. Graham flung down Leverett's manuscript angrily.

"Confound the fellow!" he growled. "But what a fist he's got!"

It was a merciless weapon, that fist. In his opening paragraph the great critic, here cool and logical, utterly demolished Dewar's artistic tenets with a few tremendous blows. And then! temperance was abandoned and Leverett pounced brutally as a mutilating savage on his fallen foes. His cruel sarcasm flashed like a scalping-knife as he kindled the torture-fires of his scorn and summoned his tribesmen to jeer at the flayed Dewarites, "including," wrote Leverett, "a certain hapless Miss Roy, the futility of whose poor, tragic little daubs is equaled only by their innocent humor."

Graham plunged into his work, smiling at his vain efforts to forget how much Leverett's decision might mean to him. From time to time messengers scurried in with proof and voluminous copy. Graham strolled into the composing-room and looked at the make-up of the "Art and Letters" page.

"Leverett's feature stuff in hand?" queried Simpson, the foreman. "That's all we're holding for." He indicated the unfilled column.

"Yes," said Graham. "Copy's on my desk."

He sauntered out thoughtfully. Could he not revise some of those brutal phrases? Leverett had consented to lend his celebrated name to the *Courier* only on condition that he should be absolutely unconstrained, for he was as childishly sensitive as an actor. Graham sighed. The article must be printed. He returned to his office and called a messenger.

"Take this to Mr. Simpson," said he. "This—this——" But where was it?

The blue envelope and its contents had disappeared!

Twice Graham explored every cranny of his desk and every bundle of manuscript on it. He shook out the waste basket desperately and cross-examined the office-boy. No, the boy didn't know nothing, he hadn't seen nobody take no paper. Graham sent him on a tour of discreet inquiry. The editor did not wish to advertise the fact that he had lost the feature of his page. The boy came back empty-handed. Graham rang up Leverett's apartments on the telephone. A tired feminine voice informed him that Mr. Leverett was aboard ship.

Norman groaned. "Who's this, please?" This was Mr. Leverett's private secretary.

"Well," said Graham, "this is the *Courier*. Some—ah—words are missing in Mr. Leverett's article. It's most important to supply them. Can you find his original draft?"

"Guess not," replied the girl. "Will to-morrow do?"

"No," yelled Graham tempestuously. "I'll come up to see you myself."

He grabbed his hat and ran to the elevator.

"Looks like the book editor's doin' a fire assignment," observed the office boy, and began to restore a semblance of order to Graham's disheveled desk.

The amanuensis had Leverett's pen-written draft ready for Graham when he arrived. He pocketed the manuscript with profound gratitude and turned down Fifth Avenue, which wore the hospitably informal air of a summer evening. As Graham passed a fashionable restaurant he met the eyes of Miss Carlotta Roy. She was dining with Dewar at a table by the open window.

Graham laughed and hurried on, but Carlotta made a gaily imperious gesture which compelled him to join her. Dewar stroked his blond beard and received Graham with a brisk cordiality which the newspaper man thought was rather overacted.

"Kummel?" suggested the artist.

"No, thank you," said Graham. "I'm supposed to be on duty. Well, coffee, yes—one lump."

"What do you think?" demanded Miss Roy. She was in the height of good hu. "What do you think has happened?"

Graham intercepted the happy and oddly submissive glance which she meant for Dewar, and acknowledged, with a qualm of sulkiness, that he couldn't imagine what had happened.

"Antony has just seen Chaffee of the *Weekly Art Review*," said Carlotta. "Do you know him? Chaffee says that our pictures are to be puffed—oh, enormously!—and that Leverett is leading the puffers. Now!"

"Yes, I know Chaffee," muttered Graham. He did not add that he knew him as an idiot with a jocose fondness for deception—"stringing people," Chaffee called it.

"And have you seen Leverett's puff for the *Courier*?" continued Miss Roy excitedly. "Oh, do tell me!"

Graham looked at her doubtfully. "Leverett's article isn't at the office yet," he said, hesitating over the words.

"Well, this is a great night for us," laughed Dewar. "I pledge you, *ma chere*. Mr. Graham, won't you join?"

"Oh, coffee would insult the toast," objected Norman. He felt at an exasperating disadvantage.

Carlotta flushed faintly as Dewar thrust forward his liqueur glass. "To the blossoming of our hopes," said she, clinking the glass with her own.

"To the blossoming of our hopes," repeated Dewar, more gravely.

Miss Roy's eyes fell upon the waving greenery of the window plants and there was a moment's silence. Dewar shrugged his shoulders, as if to shake off the film of seriousness which had fallen.

"If you will pardon," he proposed, "I will go to bring Carlotta's wrap."

"But you needn't bother—here's the waiter," she said.

Dewar bowed. "I would rather fetch your cloak myself," he insisted, and strode away. He had an old-fashioned knack of carrying off an extravagant compliment.

Graham, in the meantime, glowered at his coffee, and the conscious-

ness that he appeared like a surly fool did not mend matters. He fingered the manuscript in his pocket irresolutely. It was clear that Carlotta must be undeceived, but how? He could not think. His mind was clogged by his dislike for Dewar, a dislike which he was ashamed to observe was near to apprehension.

"What's the trouble, Norman?" asked the girl. Her tone was hard to his sensitive fancy. "What are you moping about? I have never been so happy, I believe—and you sit like a death's head at the feast."

"Well, I'm afraid—afraid you're making a great mistake to-night," he hazarded slowly.

The curve of her lips straightened. "I am sorry," said she, "but I think that is my own concern."

"Carlotta!"

"Oh, I have faith in plain speaking. It hurts to see you so ill-tempered, so small, as you've been to-night. And why? Because I choose to make a close friend of Antony Dewar. Why not of him as well as of any one—and, perhaps, better?" She was cool enough to smile at her own English and the smile did not help the situation.

"Good heavens!" groaned Norman. "You think that I am jealous!"

"Why," she said, "I don't wish to flatter myself." She leaned forward impulsively. "Norman," she went on, "please be sure of this—that I'm not wounding you wantonly or needlessly. I am not a coquette. I mean to be kind and fair. But you know how dear the success of my art is to me—and now if Antony and I should——"

She broke off abruptly when Dewar returned bearing a fluffy cloak of gossamer lace. He arranged it over her shoulders with a spectacular air of ownership and they rolled off in a hansom, and Graham on

the curbstone heard them laughing together.

Graham clenched his fist over the manuscript in his coat. When that was printed their laughter should change its tune. He laughed, too, at a mental picture of Dewar reading Leverett's diatribe in the morning. But—Carlotta!

When she saw the criticism, what would Carlotta think of him, remembering their quarrel of to-night? Graham struck his cane viciously against the pavement. Would she not ascribe some of the *Courier's* virulence to his spite and selfishness? In her present mood she seemed capable of thinking anything of him that was cheap and petty. If he was discarded for Dewar, Graham would show them both that he was a good loser. His nerves were stretched taut. When a romantic impulse suddenly tugged at him, reason could not pull against it. He reentered the hotel and banged the door of a telephone booth.

"Yes, this is Simpson," responded the foreman of the composing-room over the wire.

"About that Leverett space," said Graham. "You've got revised stuff to fill that column, haven't you?"

"Sure!" acquiesced Simpson. "Ain't you coming down?"

"No," said the editor. "Send the page to press," and he rang off and tore the Leverett manuscript into little bits before he emerged into the corridor. "This copy was received too late for publication," he decided triumphantly.

But, although he assured himself that he had triumphed over jealousy, he was very unhappy and he tramped the streets, morose and melancholy, until bed-time.

While Graham was unfolding his

morning newspaper in his lodgings a messenger boy brought him a penciled note from Carlotta Roy.

"Come and see me at once," it read. "Now that it's all over—Norman, I can both laugh and cry—come at once."

What was "all over"? Graham's fears kept pace with the speed with which he hurried to the studio. Carlotta was alone. He did not see that her fingers trembled in her lap. He did see that her blue painting gown was becoming, and he told her so.

"I can't fancy why I put it on," Carlotta said. "Force of habit, I presume." She raised her eyes and looked straight at him. "I have to ask your forgiveness, Norman. Last night I thought that your manner meant—something that it did not."

"Jealousy?"

"Yes."

"But perhaps I was jealous, Carlotta. In spite of it I want you to know that I care only for your happiness."

Her eyes melted, her face softened incredibly. "I am sure of that," she said, "when I remember how you endured my taunts and kept your secret, just for the sake of my evening."

"What secret?"

"Why, Leverett's criticism of our pictures."

Graham gasped. "You mean that you know——"

"I didn't know then, you dear goose. But I read the *Courier* before I got up."

She pointed at the newspaper, outspread on a divan. Graham bent over it. The scathing printed words of Leverett's article danced under his astonished gaze. Simpson had found the manuscript in his desk. Graham was dumb. He read one or two brutal phrases mechanically.

"So I'm no longer an artist, no longer a Dewarite," Carlotta was saying. "Norman, I do ask your pardon for my suspicions last evening."

"But I'm as sorry for this as I can be! If you knew how I tried——"

"Sorry!" Miss Roy waved her hand scornfully. "I've failed. I've

been a foolish disciple and I've failed, as I deserved. It's all over."

"Carlotta!" cried Graham, hardly daring to breathe. "Carlotta, you'll let me ask——"

"I've nothing to do now except to listen to you," she replied demurely. "That's the bargain."



How Venus Came To Davis Center

By Henry M. Hyde.



As Squire Johnson opened the front door of the Palace drug store the attached bell jangled shrilly. At the sound, Martin Van Buren Bates, the druggist, came hurriedly up the cellar steps at the rear of the store room, bending over sideways under the weight of a coal-scuttle full of sawdust.

"Oh, Van," called the Squire, "come on out here, quick. Uncle Si's a-comin' up the Cedarville road settin' on top of a box as big as my smoke-house."

The druggist, a dried-up little man with a round, wrinkled face, like a frost-bitten red apple, came trotting down to the front door. He did not go outside, where he could be seen, but squinted cautiously down the road through a dirty show window.

"Gosh! That is a whopper," he said, as Uncle Si's one-horse wagon came into sight. "I wonder what the old man's been a-buyin' up now?"

"He's gettin' wuss an' wuss all the time," said the Squire. "Got so now that an ordinary farm sale don't have no more effect on him than a glass of sweet cider. System's so full of th' auction habit that he jes' has to go down to Chicago every so often an' tackle a hull street full of red flags.

Auction sprees are full as expensive as likker, too. If he belonged to me I'd ruther it'd be rum."

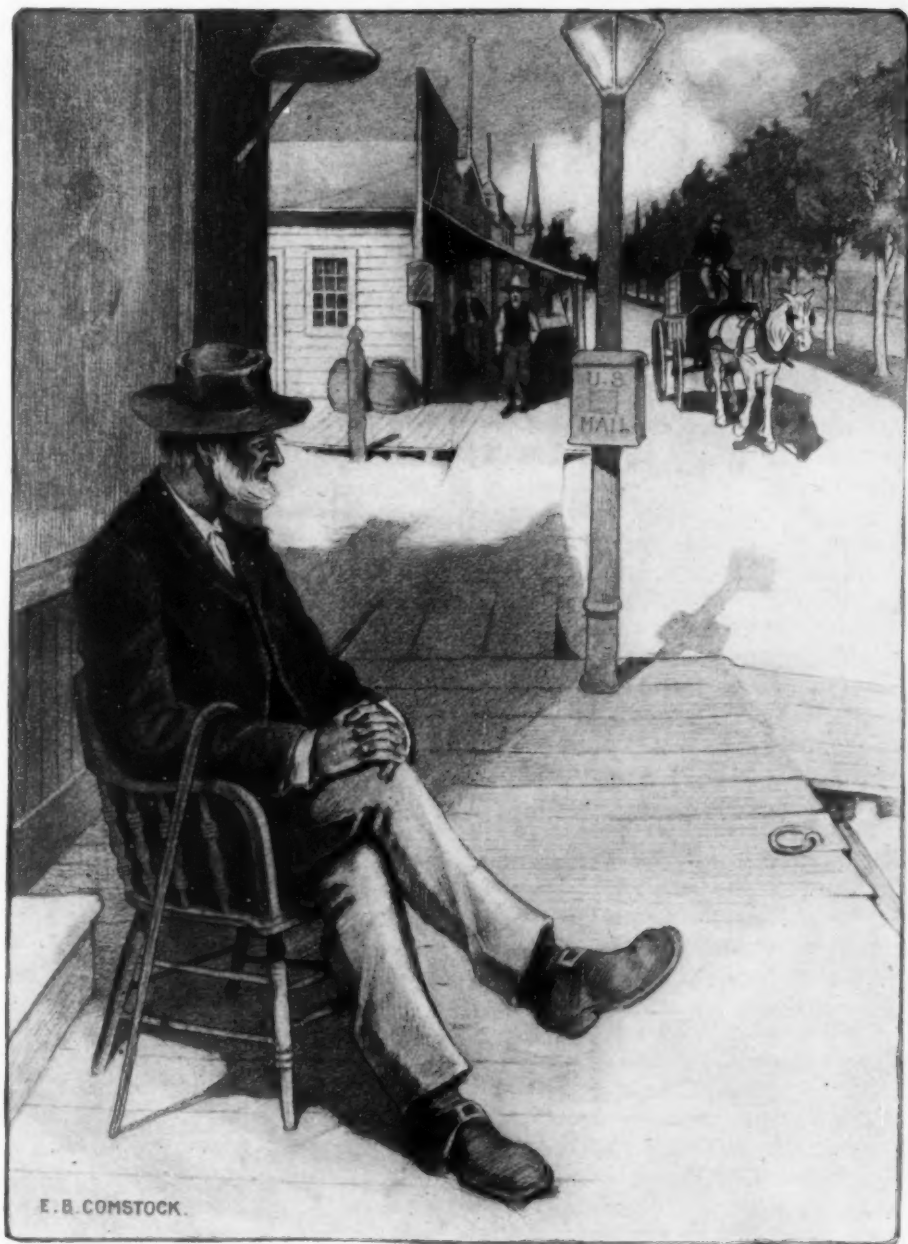
"What do you suppose he's brung back with him this time?" broke in the druggist.

"Look out," warned the Squire, "don't let him see you. I'll set down outside and we'll lay fer him."

Squire Johnson closed the front door, sat down in an armchair on the sidewalk, tilted it back against the front of the drug store, crossed his long legs, took a fresh chew of tobacco, and stared up the dusty road in the opposite direction from that in which Uncle Si's wagon was approaching.

The druggist retired to a point from which he could see down the road, while at the same time he was screened from view by a pyramid of green paper almanacs.

But the sharp old eyes of Uncle Silas Cochran were wide open, half hidden though he was in the cloud of dust kicked up by the shambling white horse. He had seen the Squire dodge into the drug store and come out again. He knew perfectly well that the druggist was watching him from inside. He understood from experience that an



DRAWN BY ENOS B. COMSTOCK

“Squire Johnson stared up the dusty road.”

ambuscade had been prepared for him, and he drove forward to meet the enemy with the light of battle in his eyes.

Ever since he had first tasted the delights of auction buying and had begun to bring back to Davis Center huge packages of weird and unheard

of articles, "knocked down" to him in the "job lot" houses of Chicago at ridiculous prices, the Squire and the druggist had been in league against him. Most of his purchases he had succeeded, sooner or later, in unloading on the inhabitants of the village, but there were still several boxes and barrels in his big red barn, as yet unopened, and the contents of which were an aggravating mystery to the Squire and the druggist. Judged by Davis Center standards, Uncle Silas was rich and he could afford to indulge his passion, but it had come to be half the fun of the game for him to foil their efforts to find out what he had been buying.

Uncle Si pulled up his white horse directly in front of the drug store.

"Mornin', Squire," he said abruptly.

Squire Johnson turned with a start of affected surprise. He was a tall, gaunt man, who for thirty years had been cultivating a fancied resemblance to Abraham Lincoln.

"Wall, Silas," he said, "where'd you blow in from?"

The little druggist pushed open his jangling front door and stepped out onto the board walk in his shirt sleeves. He, also, was apparently greatly surprised.

"Mornin', Si," he called, "I see you're back."

"Wall, how do you like th' rear view," answered Uncle Silas, who had a reputation for wit to sustain.

Squire Johnson laughed at the discomfort of the druggist. His laugh was colossal, reverberating. That laugh ranked as the chief natural wonder of Davis Center. After visitors to the village had been taken to see the "Injun" mound and the deserted frame house in which a legendary Irishman had murdered his wife and four small children—the number of children increasing as the

years went by—they were always invited, as an awe-inspiring climax, to listen to Squire Johnson laugh.

"How'd you find She-caw-go?" finally asked the Squire, with poorly concealed curiosity.

"Easy enough," answered Uncle Si promptly. "Bought a ticket straight through an' got on th' train. Didn't have no trouble a-tall in findin' it."

"How's business in th' city," pursued the Squire, determined to find out what was in the big packing case.

"Purty middlin', thank ye. Balloons still goin' up. Wells goin' down fast. Big drop in pile drivers. Me an' Marsh Field an' Ly Gage an' Carter Harrison et dinner together one noon, an' they wa'n't one of us had any kick comin'."

"Pick up anythin' good in town?" asked the Squire, putting one hand meaningly on the corner of the big packing case.

"Can't say's I did. Picked up a ten-dollar bill on Lay Salle street, but 'twan't good. 'Twas counterfeited."

"Silas," broke in the druggist desperately, "what you got in that box?"

The old man on the wagon smiled grimly. This was fighting at close quarters, and he enjoyed it.

"What have you got in that box, Si?" repeated the druggist pleadingly.

"Might be stuffed alligators," answered Uncle Si dryly. "Want to buy a couple fer your center table?"

The two men laughed uneasily. They were not at all sure but Uncle Silas was speaking the truth. They would not have been especially surprised if he had brought home a box full of live ant-eaters. He would buy anything if it were sold cheap enough. They remembered how Uncle Si had got all the women in

Davis Center to wearing hoop skirts, ten years after the rest of the world had forgotten them. They knew that every other "front parlor" in the village contained as one of its chief ornaments a rattlesnake preserved in alcohol, Uncle Silas having bought up five dozen such awesome specimens at an auction sale of the contents of a Denver curio establishment. They were therefore prepared for anything. At the same time they considered it good policy to look incredulous.

"You fellers seem to think I ain't tellin' you th' truth," went on Uncle Si as he glanced at them. "Mebbe I ain't. Mebbe that box is full of a rheumatiz cure as is some good! Eh, Van? Git up," he added to his horse, without waiting to see what were the effects of his final shot at the druggist.

The soiled white horse jogged off down the dusty road and the Squire and the druggist looked at each other in baffled silence.

"Mebbe it was rheumatiz cure, Van," said the Squire finally. "I noticed that box was labelled 'Glass, with care.'"

"I don't think it," answered the druggist. "Anyway I'm goin' to send Maw up to call on Mis' Cochran after dinner. Mebbe she kin find out."

Meanwhile Uncle Si, turning off from Main street, drove up to his big red barn and, before going into the house, carefully unloaded the mysterious box. It was heavy, and the old man slid it down to the ground from the back of his wagon on a couple of planks. He handled it as if it contained eggs. Then he unhitched his horse, ran the wagon into its shed, first taking out a couple of bundles, and walked up through the back yard to the kitchen door.

"Well, Maw, I'm back," he said

as his old wife turned from the kitchen stove to receive him.

"So I see, Silas," the old woman answered dryly. "What foolishness d'you bring back with you this trip?"

As a matter of principle Mis' Cochran frowned on her husband's frequent yieldings to the insidious temptings of the auction habit. As a matter of fact she enjoyed his "sprees" quite as much as he did. While he was away she had the pleasure of wondering what in the world he would bring back with him next, and his strange purchases broke the level monotony of life in Davis Center with many delightful thrills of excited interest. Besides, the fact that she was always the first and often the only person to really know what spoil Uncle Si had accumulated on each of his trips gave her a pleasant prominence as an authority among the village gossips.

"What foolishness you been up to this trip, Silas?" repeated the old lady, as she set a chair for her husband at the breakfast table.

"Most foolish thing I done this trip," answered Uncle Silas, "was to buy this dress pattern fer a vain an' giddy old woman"—handing one of his bundles to his wife. "'Less you count this here even worse."

He gave her the second and smaller bundle, which contained a pair of black silk mitts.

"This is beautiful, Silas," said his wife, as she unfolded the dress pattern and held it up to the light. Then, looking at him from the corners of her eyes, she asked, half in disappointment:

"You didn't buy nothin' else, Silas?"

"Wall, I might 'a' picked up a few little things," said the old man.

"What'd you git, Silas?"

"Now, Maw, I don't know's——"

"Silas Cochran," broke in the old

lady, "you go right straight out to thet barn an' git me a sample o' what you been buyin'."

Uncle Si obeyed. He went out to the red barn, locked the doors, pushed the wooden slides over the windows, pried up one end of the cover of the box he had just unloaded and took out a small package, carefully wrapped up in brown paper. It was about the size and shape of a child's large slate.

"Now, Maw," began Uncle Si, as he went back into the kitchen, "I don't know as you'll think——"

"Lemme look at it, Silas," interrupted the old woman.

Uncle Si unwrapped the brown paper and held the object it had covered up to the window. "Maw" Cochran stared at it a moment with wide eyes and open mouth.

"That's high art, Maw," said Uncle Silas, hoping to interrupt the coming storm.

"It's scandalous, that's what it is, Silas Cochran, an' you know it. It's indecent an' improper, that's what it is. Lemme look at that closter."

She took the thing out of her husband's hands and began to inspect it minutely.

"How many o' them things you got, Silas Cochran?" she demanded sternly.

"I only got one gross of 'em, Maw," he answered. "An' they're the cheapest things you ever heard tell of. Why, the glass alone is wuth more'n I paid for 'em. Maw, would you believe it, them was knocked down t'me on a bid of one-five a dozen."

"Silas, you ain't fit to be trusted in She-caw-go without a gardeen. Now you wrap this thing right up again an' take it back to the barn. If you got a hundred and forty-three more like this you want to nail that

box kiver down on'em all so's it'll stay nailed. You jest go an' do it now before you git a bite to eat. If it ever gits out that you got anythin' like this about the place, why, I'll apply fer my papers. Silas, I'm 'shamed of you."

Then as he started through the kitchen door her curiosity got the better of her shocked sensibilities.

"Are they all jest like th' one you brought in, Silas?" she called after him.

"Yes, Maw."

"Then nail th' box up tight, Silas, an' put it away where they won't nobody git at it. An' hurry. The coffee's cold now."

Half an hour later the big box, with its contents intact, was hidden at the bottom of the pile of barrels and crates in the loft of the big red barn.

"Maw" Cochran did not mention the subject again when Uncle Si finally came in to breakfast, and when Mis' Bates, the druggist's wife, "called in," after dinner, with her curiosity at the bursting point, she was met with a sharp and final rebuff.

So all summer long the dust grew thicker on the top of the big box in the loft of Uncle Si's red barn, and all summer Squire Johnson and his crony, the druggist, tried in vain to get the slightest clue to its contents.

In early September Mis' Johnson, the Squire's wife, came back from Chicago, full of the idea of starting a woman's club in Davis Center. She talked it over with Mis' Cochran, and those two called a preliminary meeting. The women of the village were invited "to gather at the home of Mrs. Juliana B. Johnson"—thus already was the Squire ignored—"for the purpose of forming a Woman's Club, to be eventually affiliated with the National

Federation of Women's Clubs."

In response to this somewhat formidable invitation, the women of Davis Center met, formed their club, and elected Mis' Johnson president, and "Maw" Cochran secretary. Then they appointed a Committee on Legislative Action and another on Program, and settled down to make a winter of it.

sat on the platform with her in the grade school-room, where the meeting was held. The Squire, Uncle Silas and the little druggist occupied the front row of chairs, and thus shared in the glory of their respective wives. The room was packed, every member of the Davis Center Woman's Club being present.

The professor was young, enthusi-



DRAWN BY ENOS B. COMSTOCK

"That's high art, Maw," said Uncle Silas."

In October they held their first public meeting, with a University Extension Lecturer from Chicago as the chief attraction. His subject was "The Influence of Art and Environment," and every club member brought her husband to listen to the address.

Mis' Johnson presided and "Maw" Cochran and Mis' Bates, respectively secretary and treasurer of the club,

astic and eloquent, but in spite of his eloquence Uncle Silas began to grow sleepy before the lecture had got fairly under way. For a time he was kept wide-awake by the warning eye which "Maw" Cochran cast down at him from the platform. Then, just as Uncle Si finally yielded and his head began to droop forward on his chest, the speaker started into a new line of thought, and the old

man sat up suddenly in his chair, wide-eyed and interested.

"In these days of photographic reproductions," the professor was saying, "there is no reason why the choicest treasures of all art, ancient and modern, should not be in every home. What excuse is there for longer disfiguring the walls of our living rooms with daubs and chromos when for fifty cents one may secure a photograph of such an immortal masterpiece, for instance, as the Venus of Milo?"

A suppressed smile struggled for expression around the corners of Uncle Si's mouth. His eyes were bright with a new light.

To further illustrate his idea of the proper decoration of the home, the professor, at the conclusion of his lecture, passed around, for the inspection of the audience, a number of photographs of famous statues and paintings. Uncle Silas only glanced at most of them as they were handed to him, but when the Venus of Milo reached him he clutched it firmly in his right hand, rose to his feet, and held it up above his head so that the professor and most of the people in the room could see it plainly.

"You recommend this Venus picture, don't you, Professor?" he asked in a shrill voice.

"Yes," said the young man in a somewhat patronizing way, "I don't think any one could make a mistake by buying a photograph of that famous masterpiece."

"What d'you say the regaler price of it was?"

"I have seen photographs like that sold as low as fifty cents," said the professor.

"Thank ye," said Uncle Silas, and sat down with all eyes upon him.

Uncle Silas and "Maw" Cochran walked part of the way home after

the lecture with the druggist and his wife. They discussed to some extent the new idea of household art, and the druggist, who also dealt in objects of art, "reckoned he'd better put in a stock of them photos."

"'Twouldn't be a bad idee," said Uncle Silas.

When Mr. and Mrs. Bates turned off Main street at the old Brown corner, leaving Uncle Si and "Maw" to walk on alone, the old man spoke to his wife in a triumphant tone.

"See anythin' to-night, Maw," he asked, "that you ever seen before?"

"Don't know's I did, Silas. What d'you mean?"

"Must be a-sufferin' from loss of memory, Maw. You're the seketary of this club, ain't you, Maw?"

"Yes, Silas."

"What's your duties?"

"Oh, I keep a list of th' members of the club and th' minutes of——"

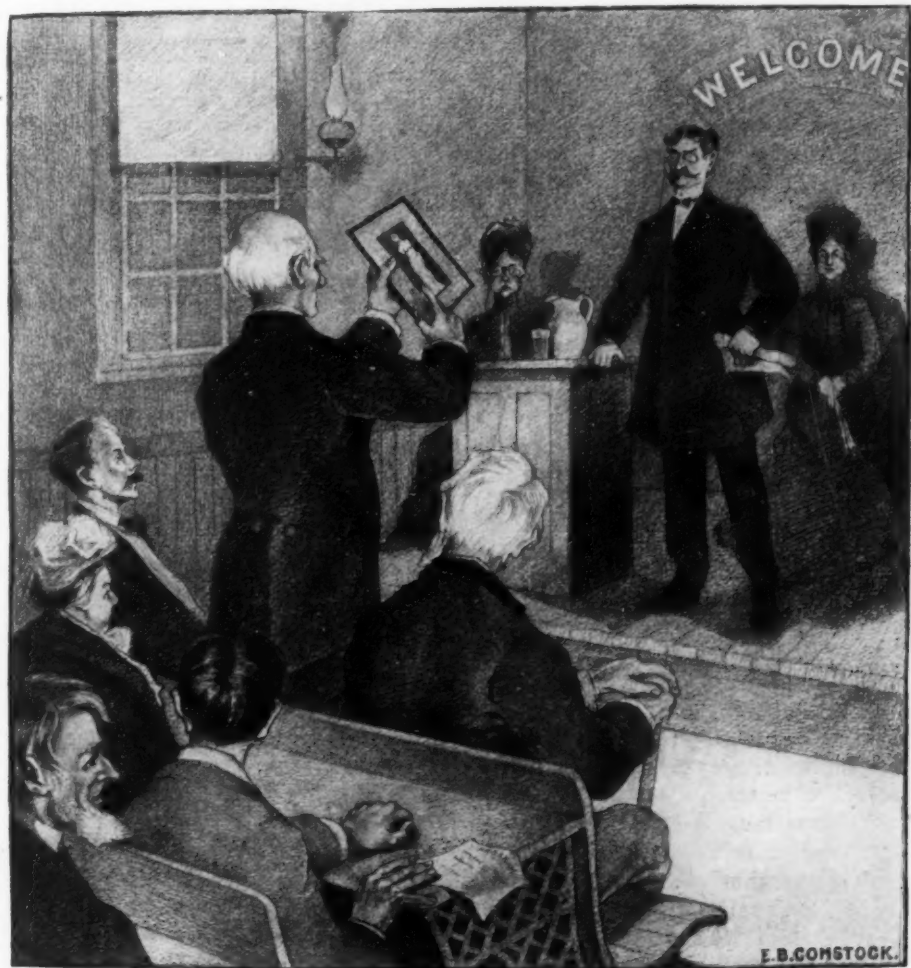
"That's what you got in that book there, ain't it? Lemme carry it fer ye, Maw. 'Scuze me fer not noticin' it before."

Uncle Silas was up before five o'clock next morning, leaving "Maw" sleeping the sound sleep of the newly-enlightened in matters of household art.

Bubbling with suppressed mirth, the old man went out to the barn and knocked the whole cover off the long-forbidden box from Chicago. Then he unwrapped one of the pictures which lay next the top.

"It's the eye-dential thing," he said to himself. "Jest 's I knew 'twas."

He took the pictures out of the box by the armful until the whole gross was safely deposited in the box of his spring wagon. He hitched up the soiled white horse, and with "Maw's" list of members on the seat beside him he started off to make the rounds.



DRAWN BY ENOS B. COMSTOCK

"You recommend this Venus picter, don't you Professor?"

Womankind in Davis Center, as elsewhere, loves a bargain, and when Uncle Silas offered exact duplicates of the professor's fifty-cent photograph of the Venus of Milo at a quarter each, he found almost every member of the Woman's Club ready and anxious to buy. Before seven o'clock he had sold an even four dozen. Then he covered the remainder of the pictures with his laprobe and drove by the drug store, just as Martin Van Buren Bates was "opening up" for the day.

"Mornin', Silas," said the druggist, "you're out bright and early this mornin' after all th' excitement."

Then, as he noticed the covered pile in the back of the wagon, his curiosity urged him on.

"What you got in this mornin', Silas?" he asked.

"Some of th' stuff out o' that Shecaw-go box you an' the Squire's been so anxious to find out about all summer."

"Lemme see, will you?"

For answer, Uncle Silas handed

over one of the photographs.
"Why, Silas, it's the photograph the professor was a-talkin' about last night."

"Eye-dentical."

"How many you got, Silas?"

"More'n I know what to do with."

"Lemme have a couple of dozen of 'em, will ye, Si?"

"Naw. Don't think I will. You'd git stuck on 'em an' blame me fer it."

"Come on, Si, sell me two dozen of 'em."

"On yere own resk I will," answered Uncle Si, "an' they'll cost you twenty cents apiece if you want 'em."

Uncle Si counted out twenty-four of the pictures, put the money paid him by the little druggist in his pocket, and started the white horse for home.

When he had turned the corner next the drug store he slapped himself on the thigh and laughed a long, noiseless laugh.

"There, now," he said out loud, "I hope that blamed little cuss's cur'osity's satisfied. An' I'm blamed sorry that Squire Johnson ain't keepin' store, too."

"Maw" came out to the barn to meet him, when he drove in. She

had been frightened by his long and unexpected absence.

"Silas Cochran, where y' been?" she demanded.

"A-peddlin' out high art to the Davis Center Woman's Club," he said, with a chuckle.

"Silas, are y' plum crazy?"

"No, Maw, I ain't. I'm jest tickled. You ain't forgot that gross of Venus picters you made me nail up and put away last summer, have ye? The professor last night made his chief brag on that very picter, Maw, and you never remembered it. I paid one-five a dozen fer 'em, or twelve-sixty for the gross. I jest been out an' sold one of 'em to each an' every member of the Woman's Club for a quarter apiece, which is cuttin' the professor's price clean in two, an' 'Marty' Bates insisted on buyin' two dozen more from me to put in his show windows. He got his'n at twenty cents. Altogether I've cleaned up sixteen-forty on 'em, already."

"Silas!"

"Yes, an' they's six full dozen left fer you, Maw, an' you kin have Venus de Milos in every window in th' house. Kind o' seems as if th' club seckitary ought to be stronger on 'em than jest plain members."



A Sop to Cerberus

BY JOHN WHITTLESEY KNAPP

The third day out from New York the wind had risen with the sea and tore by with rain in its wake, shrieking like imprisoned demons. Almost all aboard had sought the seclusion which a cabin grants, or were hopelessly and unreservedly sea-sick. The decks, which had blossomed with gay color and were cheery with chatter, had now the abandoned look of the traditional banquet hall deserted.

The only feminine creature with bravery enough to come forth in the teeth of the storm was a tall, dark girl who paced the slippery deck on the lee side and breasted the gale as if reveling in its splendid fury. She had paused a moment in the companionway, buttoning her storm-coat close about her chin and stabbing a long hatpin securely through the white "tam" pulled down over her hair. It was insufferably warm and close inside, and the little stewardess, leaning patiently against the rail where the steamer rugs hung, looked the color of pale absinthe tinged with blue, fighting off the prevailing malady with the stoicism of the Spartan boy with the fox gnawing at his breast.

A youth, with the first pale promise of an anæmic beard on his girlish chin, was picking out tunes with one finger on the little white-and-gold piano in the music room forward, and had rasped the girl's nerves into throes of agony. He had much the overgrown look of a forced, hothouse mushroom, and his long, limp, nerveless hands gave her strange shivers.

To Coventry, who had made his way forward as far as the promenade

deck, stoutly buttoned in his storm-coat, she seemed to suggest a pert, saucy brown sparrow as she cocked her head to one side to meet the whip of the wind. Once, as she stood over against the gunwale, he had seen her spread out her arms, the cape of her long coat billowing behind her like wings, her face uplifted, and a look of ecstasy in her eyes as if the riotous fury about her gratified some inner restlessness and insistent tumult, calmed and soothed by this fierce battle of the elements.

"You like it, miss?" smiled the deck steward as he passed and caught that uplifted look of tingling delight. "It's pretty stiff, eh?"

"Like it?" she beamed radiantly, tucking little wisps of soft hair under her cap; "I love it! This feel of the wind in one's face over miles of frothy water, and old Neptune on the rampage! I never knew anything so intoxicating—except once, when I rode on the cowcatcher of an engine down a Colorado cañon."

"In another incarnation she was a seagull," mused Coventry, pulling his cap over his eyes and blinking against the mist. "I'm absolutely sure of it; she was a pretty, soft, gray seagull."

Coventry watched the bow sink into yeasty depths, then lurch skyward with a roar of maddened waters; he watched the foremast shiver and plunge like a tipsy mariner, while the water slapped the steel plates viciously; and faced the scurrying wind and the wet gloom, while his long coat whipped about him, his eyes stung with the spray,

and the breath was beaten back in his throat.

The girl was huddled back in a somewhat sheltered corner now, and had taken a book from the pocket of her coat when the ship listed suddenly. She staggered forward and the book shot across the deck on its open face in whirling flight. As Coventry leaned to pick it up, he could hardly fail to see the name, Justine Van Fleet, scrawled in the big, bold, fashionable chirography of the present day, across the fly leaf. It happened to be a copy of "Lorna Doone," bound in limp chamois. A look of sudden pleasure lighted the young man's plain, rather heavy-featured face at sight of the fly-leaf. He was a well-set-up, broad-chested young fellow of twenty-seven, with a smooth-shaven face and the kindly, gentle eyes of a King Charles spaniel. His clothes were well cut and he wore them with the easy grace of a man who, though rather indifferent to conventionalities, bows to the superior wisdom of his tailor. He had a rather serious, reserved manner, and an uncommonly mellow voice.

With raised hat he extended the book to the girl, who now clung to the rail, her hair blown forward over her face, and laughing with the abandon of a child over a boisterous romp.

"Beg pardon—you are Justine Van Fleet? My name is Coventry—David Coventry——"

"Oh—then you are the Mr. Coventry whom Alison Steele says her brother is always raving about! She *said* you were to sail when we did; and you were to have been at the Cunningham's house party when we were there in September——"

"And was unavoidably detained, much to my regret."

"Yes, Alison told me—you were

called to England on business; she is *such* a dear—Alison Steele; speaks four languages and made the best fudge at Vassar."

"I believe that accomplishment forms what might be called the *pièce de resistance* in the higher education of woman."

"She was always telling marvelous tales of your exploits—and 'these things to hear did Desdemona seriously incline.' She knows how I *adore* the West—although we live in New York and Mama is London-mad, and we spend half our time blearing round in the fog over there."

"I've been wondering, ever since I've watched you walking the deck——"

"Whence all but she had fled——"

"Whether Fate would be kind to me, and if I might meet you before we reached the other shore."

"My poor Lorna Doone!" dabbling the wet leaves tenderly with her handkerchief, "she came near going down to furnish Sunday reading to the wiggly little mermaids."

"I wonder why it is that all women seem to dote on that book?"

They had reached the sheltered corner again, the ship having righted herself with a lurch, and Coventry, after dragging over some deck chairs, was tucking Miss Van Fleet's steamer rug snugly about her; she having carried it over her arm before, like a blue-and-white pennant in the breeze.

"I think the reason they dote on it," she ventured naively, "is because of woman's natural penchant for strength—just a little touched with brutality."

"I fancy the reason is largely geographical, the scene of its location is so picturesque; enthusiastic pilgrims are daily visiting the Lorna Doone country. There's an awful lot of fic-

tion dependent upon local color for success. Let them locate the same tale in some trite old spot, and they wouldn't go into many *éditions de luxe* and soft vellum.

Then she turned to their proposed itinerary. Yes, unfortunately, they were going to "settle" in London; she herself abhorred London, but Mama was a victim of Anglomeningitis. No, she had not been educated abroad, simply because she would *not* be, she was American to her finger tips, and she had only crossed twice before. And the only consolation for crossing at all was occasionally to encounter a grand old tearing gale like this. Yes, they would browse round the Continent awhile, then settle down in London; and if she were a man she would "say words" about London. The Honorable Mrs. Stanhope-Hull was her aunt, a widow, and they were to reside with her in her big, gloomy Belgravia mansion. A distant relative of the Honorable Mrs. Stanhope-Hull's was traveling with them—had Mr. Coventry noticed a very bored looking gentleman with a monocle, who had a *receding* chin and a *proceeding* nose?

Yes, Coventry remembered to have felt a consuming envy of the gentleman in his evident close acquaintance with Miss Van Fleet; and had seen the unmistakable pea-green hue of approaching seasickness steal over the erstwhile ruddy hue of his broad, beefy English face, with a joy which the truly good can never know. He was to "come into something" after a while—she didn't quite know what, a title of some sort—she believed an Englishman thought that an undisputed passport to heaven. He was a very good sort, but slow and heavy—oh, *deadly* heavy, and as dull as a Puritan Sabbath! And his sense of humor was

like his title—something he hadn't come into yet; he might inherit the title, but he couldn't by any possibility ever expect to inherit the sense of humor, as it had been conspicuously absent in all his ancestors. They had planned to be in Paris "about the first of May"—they were to meet the Cunninghams there; and she hoped by that time her adjectives would not be so frayed at the edges and sagged at the seams that she wouldn't have any left to enthuse over Paris with; and didn't he *love* dear, beautiful Paris?

And then it transpired that Coventry also had planned to be in Paris "about the first of May"; and they congratulated each other upon this with enthusiasm which was not in the least dampened by the spray that drenched the deck, nor cooled by the cutting winds that sang weird symphonies about them.

In the music room the youth with the embryonic hirsute promise had evidently changed fingers, and rushed off into a quick *arpeggio* movement; listening, they exchanged looks and laughed as only they can laugh to whom the wine of life is yet sweet and who have not bitten too deep into the apple which grows perennial on the tree of knowledge.

The following day the decks bloomed again with chattering groups. Correct and solemn flunkies flew here and there at the beck and call of autocratic mistresses, and masters who had long since ceased to be heroes to their valets. Every one looked a bit fagged, and condoned with every one else on the discomforts of the past twenty-four hours. The closed doors of state-rooms opened to give forth daintily-clad women, each emerging like a butterfly from an unpromising chrysalis.

Among the first to come forth was the widow of the late James Asbury Van Fleet, who felt her duenna duties calling to action. She was, in appearance, the typical American matron of middle age and aristocratic lineage; ultra-fashionable as to dress, having the reserve supposed to mark the caste of Vere de Vere, and very exclusive as to her visiting list.

"Mama devoutly believes that Adam was a Van Fleet," Miss Justine was wont to say humorously, "and that his union with Eve was in the nature of a *mesalliance*."

The extremely correct and stiff young Englishman hovered always in her wake; likewise her French maid, having in charge a hairless Mexican dog with protruding eyes and a chronic chill. This shivering creature was Miss Justine's pet abhorrence. "Poor little Fifine," she would coo in mock sympathy, "in a moment of absentmindedness he put on his dear little skin wrong side out!"

"Another impoverished lord going to have his coat-of-arms regilded with American gold, I guess," Coventry heard a man say to another as they lighted their Perfectos; "I see Mrs. Van Fleet and her pretty daughter are aboard; going over to see if the little Englishman's registered pedigree's all right, I reckon." And he felt a wild impulse to enact a *coup-de-main* and fling him overboard.

He received a very chilly and perpendicular hand-shake from the mother of his divinity when he was presented as "a friend of Ted Steele's, you know, Mama—from Colorado." And the chill of the thus-far-and-no-farther maternal attitude was very pronounced during the entire passage. He had a few rare, very rare moments with the daughter—and found himself almost

praying for a north-easter and a tempestuous sea. In the confusion and bustle of landing, when good-bye's and greetings mingled about him, he felt a small gloved hand a moment in his and heard a laughing *au revoir* in his ear. But the maternal adieu, though courteous, was unmistakably valedictory.

On a morning in May, when the trees had the newly-washed look of fresh, tender green, and the air was soft with spring promise, Coventry, strolling down the Bois with languid interest, suddenly felt his heart leap to his throat. Undoubtedly, the daughter of a hundred Van Fleets was beaming at him in radiant recognition from a victoria, her white parasol held daintily aslant, and her head under its big white hat of nodding plumes at a bewitching angle. On the seat opposite her, Marie held His Mexican Highness, still in the throes of an aspen-leaf chill. The maid's pert little face was wreathed in smiles, to be again in that Paradise of a French girl's heart—the Bois. Coventry raised his hat, while a trip-hammer accompaniment in his left side testified to inward tumult. The victoria drew up and Miss Van Fleet extended a gloved hand and beamed her undisguised delight at the chance meeting.

"'About the first of May' had seemed so very vague, you know"—Would he not drive with her? Mama had gone to the Louvre with the Cunninghams; she had begged off, herself, and taken Fifine for an airing instead, as he had been so alarmingly wheezy and asthmatic of late. She was going nowhere in particular . . . and Coventry found himself beside her and whirling down the most beautiful thoroughfare of a beauty-loving people; while her chatter flowed in a continuous stream

and she seemed an integral part of the gay, light-hearted life about her, all the world a *bon vivant*.

Yet, beneath it all, that undertone of seriousness like a thread of gold. She impressed him, as always, as having a reserve force and strength of character, much at variance with her light exterior. And this impression grew upon him; a conviction that surprising depths of sincerity lay below.

"Do you know," she said presently with a little embarrassed laugh, "that I haven't really seen the Paris of my dreams at all? Of course I've driven in the Bois and the Champs Elysees till I'm threatened with acute spinal meningitis from turning my head so many ways at once, and have done the Opera, and the obelisque, and the Madeleine, and Napoleon's tomb and all that. And I have seen the Paris of the Boulevards and the big hotels—oh, yes, we live in one like a big marble sarcophagus, where the waiters' suavity always means *sous*, and where the *maitre d'hote* gauges your letter of credit. Yes, and where the prices are so high they would make the Eiffel tower appear an underground tunnel.

"And I have climbed the stairs to Munroe's, where one sees the American *nouveau riche* clutching their Baedekers; the sort who do the stereotyped show places just as a devout Mohammedan spreads his prayer-rug with the point toward Mecca; and who prefer Madame Tussaud's to the Salon. And I have dawdled about Maxim's and Poilard's and seen the be-yewtiful gowns of the little Frenchwomen, and the fashionable fops with their waxed mustaches like skewers, who always look as if just taken out of cotton-wool from a nice satin-lined little box. And the faded old ladies

rouged and enameled, in girlish hats; and the dreadful old men with gardenias in their buttonholes and senile smiles on their wrinkled faces. Oh, yes, I have seen all this; but it is not the Paris I *want* to see!"

She turned a flushed and excited face toward Coventry, whose eyes said far more than he intended them to, and a very great deal more than the widow of the late James Asbury Van Fleet would have approved of their saying.

"I feel," she ended petulantly, with a childish *mon*, "like a poor lion with no Early Christian to eat!" Her gray eyes lifted, and her controlled laughter broke into open revolt. "I've reveled in chiffons, and furbelows, and 'creations' to my heart's content in the Rue de la Paix, and been fashionable and formal; now I want to be Latin Quarterly and larky. I want to see that Bohemian Mecca—the Boulevard St. Michel; that stretch from the Luxembourg Gardens to the Place de l'Observatoire, where the life of the Quarter ebbs and flows."

Like a child teasing for a forbidden toy, she looked up dimpling and debonaire into Coventry's face. Her palpable radiance at meeting him had set his pulses leaping, and his expression as he looked down at her undoubtedly conveyed more than a mild bucolic interest. At any rate, for some strange, altruistic reason, a wave of color mounted to the girl's face and her eyes fell. The thrilling consciousness that in that one brief moment the old-new miracle of the ages had been worked, tingled through her veins. Marie was smirking at a young guardsman in brilliant uniform who lounged beneath the trees; while His Highness growled his guttural disapproval of being stroked the wrong way of his hairless back.

As usual in such cases, the girl was the first to recover herself, and said naively: "Why may we not have a few hours of *bon camaraderie*, as these delightful French say? I have the day free till seven, when we dine with some very swagger friends of the Cunninghams. I—I hope you don't think me awfully bold and horrid if I propose we send the victoria back with Marie, and—and do the Boul' Miche'?"

She imagined his look one of serious disapproval; he was, in point of fact, wondering if there ever was another such pair of eyes in a woman's head, and had decided that there never was.

"I—I don't know of any one else I—I would care to ask"—and such hair! no, he decided, and never such hair, that gave one a tingling desire to touch, and that blew about in those little, soft wisps.

"Of course I know it's rather unconventional and may shock the code of etiquette, and that Mama would certainly have a purple apoplectic fit at the mention of it; and I don't want to persuade you against your own judgment, though Mama says I could wheedle the Damascus gate off its hinges, but——"

Marie, in the victoria a half hour later, pinched Fifine's little ears and soliloquized rapturously: "*Ceil!* and mademoiselle promises me her heliotrope crepe and the chapeau with the violets. *Viola!* the grave shall be less silent! Also I shall ask for the pink organdie with the Valenciennes."

Like two children out for a holiday, Coventry and the sole scion of the house of Van Fleet wandered down the quaint streets of the Quarter. Old women in neat fluted caps and girls in sabots, with covered baskets swinging from their arms, were bargaining for artichokes and

carrots from the grocers' carts rumbling over the cobbles, and in so doing using all the finesse of a diplomat at a foreign court, giving and taking that interchange of graceful courtesy and politeness which is the keynote of their daily lives.

"Why not have *dejeuner* at the Taverne du Pantheon?" suggested Coventry, "it is thoroughly Bohemian and typical. We can take one of those little round tables on the terrace."

"Oh, I feel," gushed the daughter of the Van Fleets rapturously, "like a little girl who has had her hair curled, and a clean pinafore on, and been sent to Sunday school—and who ran off to a circus instead!"

There were but few vacant chairs on the long terrace, and those were filling up rapidly. A group of students were drumming the table with their mugs in time to a chansonnette sung in a ringing baritone by a dark-faced youth with a pronounced Mark Antony cast of countenance.

"Why, I don't see any grisettes," struck in Justine. "Don't they always wear turned-down collars and little starched caps, and white kid slippers? These don't look Trilbyish at all!"

"You are looking for the grisette of the past. The place thereof knows her no more, and in her stead is the tailor-made grisette who wears her hair in Cleo de Merodic *bandeaux*."

A superb brunette, whose eyes proclaimed Roumanian blood, leaned a round elbow on a table over near the balustrade, looking out under level brows. Her companion, a big military looking man whose waist measure and age both touched forty, extended his cigarette case and she extracted one, her somber eyes still drinking in the color and life around her.

"I wouldn't wonder," said Coventry, "if that little girl over there, with the dancing eyes and the white teeth, works all day putting eyes in bisque dolls, or making artificial flowers, or frilling lace paper around candy boxes, but—pouf! she is having a gay little *dejeuner* with her Alfonse, and has no more thought of bemoaning her lot than a butterfly would think of asking for personal salvation and an immortal soul!"

Across the room a girl with a childish face and little thin ankles stood on her chair and sang a *chanson*, the burden of which seemed to be the amorous woes of one 'pauvre Pierre,' and which seemed entirely lacking in the pernicious quality which Miss Van Fleet had always supposed necessarily attached to a French song.

"I'm sure that must be a mute inglorious Milton over there, with the long hair and the eye in a fine frenzy rolling. Why is it we always associate disheveled hair with genius?"

"He's taking the usual absinthe route; alas, that so much real genius goes to waste, wrecked by the long green glass and a lump of sugar! By Jove! this is Friday!" Suddenly remembering that on Friday afternoon the military band plays in the Luxembourg Gardens, and at this little weekly reception one sees Bohemia at her brightest and best.

"We will see the soldiers march from their barracks, and hear the wild applause which always greets brass buttons and braid in this land of enthusiasms. We will see 'types' galore; we will eat hot waffles from the little booth near the band stand; we will see the Punch and Judy show, which, like the Lord's poor, is always with us; we will see the fountain and the roses and the Greek runners——"

"The little girl who ran away to the circus is going to ride on the band-

wagon and see the whole menagerie fed!"

In the shady grove, beyond the long avenue of chestnuts, chairs were filling with a heterogeneous audience; weazened old men in pot hats, bourgeois in happy conclave, students in flapping trousers gathered in tight at the ankle, and artists of every grade and hue. Two women sitting near, as Coventry and Justine took their chairs, were chatting volubly; one wore a scarlet crepe gown, its candor of contour as unreserved as that of a Newport bathing suit. The other, very tall and *svelte*, and carrying herself superbly, was sheathed in sea-green cloth, which gave her much the look of a big python.

"English?" hazarded the scarlet crepe, *sotto voce*, with a half glance under her lids toward Justine.

"Impossible!" hissed the big python, with raised brows and a shrug of derision; "did you not see her feet?"

"This would have set back the Tower of Babel on a level with a Quaker meeting," laughed Coventry as they listened to the medley of tongues around them. "And some of these hats must be the nightmare frenzy of a milliner's dreams; and the plumes that sweep over them must have been shed by some poor, consumptive ostrich dying of unrequited love! But you must see the rose garden and the *musée* of most wonderful pictures—bought by a government that knows how to buy pictures. You wouldn't find even a rat-catcher in Paris putting an iron dog on his front lawn—a thing our American millionaires seem to regard as a *chef d'œuvre*. See, the concert is over, the amiable little old lady who beams so benignly is folding up the chairs, and already the pigeons in the big chestnuts are

quarreling over lower berths. The little dancer from the Folies Bergere over there is hurrying home to dine and get into her spangles."

"I'd very much rather dine under the trees in front of one of those dear little cafés," said Miss Van Fleet, "than gazing over a mountain of flowers in the center of the table, and talking polite banalities and artificial nothings at the formal dinner where I must laugh with well-bred promptitude and no spontaneity at the *bon mots* I shall have flung at my poor head! It will be like going from Ur of the Chaldees to Babylon the magnificent—only I prefer Ur of the Chaldees."

As they came out of the great entrance of the *musée* and turned to look back at its imposing facade, Justine drew a little gasping breath, half laughter, half sigh. "Well," she beamed radiantly, "I suppose if Mama knew how I had 'kicked over the traces' (to use an awful, awful Americanism!), her face would wear the expression which always makes me long for a cyclone cellar. But oh! what a good time I have had!" She pulled at the fastening of her glove with nervous fingers. "I—I know of no one else I should have dared——"

"Oh, I shall burn incense to the little god of Chance for months, that I was so fortunate—that I just chanced to be strolling down the Bois at the opportune moment. My traps are packed—I was going back to London at 4.45," he laughed, "and my man is probably foaming at the mouth by this time, as I told him to have my luggage at the station"—she opened astonished eyes—"but it makes not the slightest difference, I have all the time there is. Can just as well go at 9.30. You remain——"

"Only a week longer; we are going to Cairo. I hope——"

"Why, I had some such plan myself," interrupted Coventry excitedly, "I have never taken the Nile trip. You expect to be in Cairo about——"

"I—I am not positive. I—I might"—she pulled her veil down, colored furiously, and punched little holes with the tip of her parasol in the walk as they strolled on. "I might let you know if——"

"If I give you my London address? Oh, how awfully kind! If—if I could tell you how I appreciate!"—he was fumbling in his waistcoat pocket for a card, whipped out a pencil and scribbled an address. "You will let me know?"

"I am clear over the traces now," mused this daughter of the Van Fleets, and raised her eyes to young Coventry's face with a little laughing nod. "As sure as—as the pyramids!"

"And as sure as the Sphinx, I shall be there!" said this young Lochinvar who rode out of the West.

On the terrace at Shepheard's, a few weeks later, Miss Van Fleet, with an expression of veiled anxiety in her big gray eyes, leaned an elbow on the rail and looked below at the strange commingling of the Oriental and the Occidental in the passing throng. In pith helmet and tweeds the satellite young Englishman stood near, and though ignored as always in her society, his soft, insidious egotism made him unconscious of her mental attitude. His pose of mellow cynicism, weary of the world, tired her like the oft-repeated phrases in a litany. The coach from the Gehzireh Palace was coming down the broad street *en route* to the Nile boat. Miss Van Fleet's eyes lighted with an interest which all the wonders of this most cosmopolitan city of the world had failed to bring there.

"He must have thought we were at the Gehzireh," she communed with her inner consciousness; "evidently no Sherlock Holmes blood in *his* veins. How stupid, when we've been here three days!"

Miss Van Fleet had a depressed feeling of being seven thousand miles from home this morning; but there was the coach from the Gehzireh Palace. Swarms of beggars rose to insistent clamor as it stopped before the entrance at Shepherd's; they shrilled the narrative of their woes in nasal unison, feeling this a last opportunity to speed the parting, welcome the coming guest, and going into it with much the same gusto with which a politician delivers his last stump speech the night before election. . . . What a lot of stupid people were getting out, and what a lot were leaving for the Nile boat! Suddenly she drew back with an indrawn breath, and a wave of color swept over her face and neck.

"Why, there's Mr. Coventry!" she said in her pretty drawling voice, and with admirably simulated surprise; "you remember we met him on the ship—coming over?" this with a nonchalant air of weary indifference. Mrs. Van Fleet, who had come out on the terrace, fixed him with a cold and glassy stare through her lorgnon. The Englishman, biting his mustache nervously, thrust his hands very deep into his trousers pockets and rattled his keys.

Madame's handshake, as Coventry came up onto the terrace, had all the warmth and spontaneity of a brush from the icy gills of a frozen fish. But what mattered it? Were not the daughter's eyes soft and humid with welcome?

There followed days made up of excursions on camel and donkey back.

"If I could see just one camel that

wasn't second-hand and covered all over with hieroglyphics which must have been worn there by the knees of Pharaoh's bodyguard!" the daughter of the house of Van Fleet would exclaim protestingly.

They absorbed a great deal of ancient history, mingled with small particles of desert sand, and to young Coventry the days were fraught with perilous sweetness.

"This—er—person whom you seem to have picked up, Justine," said Mrs. Van Fleet frigidly, "who is evidently—er—without antecedents—"

"But, Mama," protested her daughter, "since the Lord took up the whole first day making the Van Fleets, why, after that of course other people had to just—well, just happen, you know."

"—and so deplorably Western, and no one in particular; I do not consider him a desirable person to—er—cultivate. I trust he will not attach himself to us after we return to London; you know how your Aunt Elizabeth feels about pushing Americans, especially Westerners."

"Oh, yes, I know Aunt Elizabeth feels that Columbus made an awful blunder in discovering anything beyond the island of Manhattan"—this with a delicious circumflex accent of sarcasm—"but I don't think you need worry any about his appearing among those mass-meetings of fossils that congregate in her drawing-rooms. I'm positive he wouldn't bore himself to that extent, even to bask in the light of my presence," and she flung up her chin like a racer in the wind. "He may not read his title clear to a lot of old, musty ancestors who were probably knighted several centuries ago for something that would be punishable by a term of penal servitude now, but I think it's a great deal more to

his credit that he shoots straight, and rides straight—and *lives* straight! It sickens one, the way these Americans chase round after titles over here. Why, it's enough"—she seemed hopelessly seeking for fitting peroration—"why, it's enough to make a pessimist of—of a laughing hyena!"

A month later, the Honorable Mrs. Stanhope-Hull was receiving her guests at the top of the staircase in her big, vault-like Belgravia mansion, at the entrance to the drawing-rooms.

She was a small, sallow woman with strong religious convictions and no particular waist-line, and seemed held together almost entirely by her hairpins. But her charm of manner, her art of putting people at ease with themselves, her tact in saying all that *should* be said and never all that *could* be said, went far toward making one forget that the fatal gift of beauty was not hers. And though she had lived twenty years in London, she still fought a continual battle against reversion to type.

Like a monochrome sketch which fades into even more leaden hue by contrast with a brilliant portrait in oils, the Honorable Mrs. Stanhope-Hull appeared beside her niece. In white satin and gold embroidery the daughter of the Van Fleets shone resplendent, an amber chain knotted at her breast, and a high amber comb, the priceless heirloom of generations long since returned to dust, shone in her blue-black crinkly hair. A bunch of violets as large as her two fists thrust little purple faces through her white belt. With the adaptability and peculiar power of amalgamation which characterizes the American girl, she had become at one with the social atmosphere about her.

At the honorable lady's right

hand the widow of the late James Asbury Van Fleet represented the American matron at the pinnacle of her most exalted ambition—and did it entirely in black velvet and point lace.

At eleven o'clock nearly every one had arrived, though the receiving party still stood at the head of the great stairs. Justine was a trifle pale, and seemed to lack the enthusiasm which the occasion might naturally be expected to arouse, and her eyes looked unnaturally large from fatigue.

"Oh, I am delighted, indeed!" and the hostess caught in her little claw-like hand the broad palm of a smiling, florid gentleman beaming through his *pince nez*, whose evening dress seemed specially immaculate. Every one liked the Baronet; men for his hail-fellow-well-met good nature, and women for his easy wit, his generosity, and his magnetic personality. And besides—he knew all London. The club world, the world of Mayfair and Belgravia, the artistic world of Chelsea and St. John's Wood; cabinet ministers, duchesses, actresses, painters, journalists hobbled and elbowed one another at his evenings. He seemed always to be holding down some huge inward joke by hydraulic pressure, and it threatened to burst forth at any moment.

"I want to present the friend you so kindly urged me to bring—he's such a deuced fine sort and I can't often drag him out to do the social round. He's absorbed so much democratic simplicity since he's been living in the States, that when he crosses the pond and comes back to his native heath occasionally, he's in a blue funk at the very mention of—of anything formal, by Jove. Took an eccentric notion to live in the States—his mother was an Ameri-

can, you know—old Lord Coventry just died a few months ago—just come into the title—Coventry, this is the Honorable Mrs. Stanhope-Hull."

His hostess made some graceful, welcoming speech, and Miss Justine, apparently not the least astonished by the prelude to the introduction, held out a white hand; she made as if to laugh her little careless laugh, but looked up into young Coventry's face instead and smiled a most inscrutable but tender smile.

Not so the widow of the late James Asbury Van Fleet, who, let it be chronicled with humiliation and abasement, forgot momentarily the severe code of etiquette which so ruled her every action, and stood a perceptible instant with her mouth open!

"Odd chap, but the salt o' the earth," went on the Baronet, beaming amiably at Mrs. Van Fleet as Coventry passed on; "my fag at Eton; don't give a crooked sixpence for the title—rather run that blooming ranch out in Colorado. Visited him when I was doing the States a year ago. Raises sheep, cattle—Gad! I don't know what not! Queer now, isn't it, when he might have his letter-paper stamped with a crest—that he prefers a bucking bronco rampant on a field of alfalfa!" and he burst into his explosive and contagious laughter.

Mrs. Van Fleet had now closed her mouth and seemed to find it impossible to open it again with anything like a coherent remark. . . . A son of Lord Coventry . . . and she had treated him so cavalierly! As she realized the snobbishness of her attitude from the point of view in which it must have appeared to him, her face wore much the expression of that of a boy who has been caught smoking a cigarette. Well,

she had always *thought* his manner one of distinction . . . but how could one be expected to know? And masquerading as a Western ranchman! She gathered her confused and scattered wits together enough to make a few inane and colorless remarks to the Baronet, but was not restored to her usual complacent calm till by chance, a half hour later, she saw her daughter in laughing *tête-à-tête* with the only son of Lord Coventry in the now deserted tea-room.

Later, in the hour sacred to hair-brushes and slippers, she got into a loose dressing-gown, dismissed her maid, and crossed the hall to her daughter's dressing-room.

"I'm—I'm glad you haven't put out your candles, dear," she said in stumbling embarrassment. "I—I wanted a little talk with you." Justine had the absent look of a somnambulist as she leaned back in a huge chair, her dressing-gown in soft folds about her, and her heavy-lidded eyes lowered. She was evidently in no mood for chatter, and had the fixed gaze of one recalling an exquisite memory. "About that young—er—Coventry. I was never so absolutely paralyzed with astonishment in my life! I couldn't but admire *your* admirable self-possession—you didn't appear in the very least astonished—"

"I'm sure I didn't know why I *should* have appeared astonished, as he related his entire history, his coming into the title, *et cetera, et cetera*—when he proposed to me in Cairo." She raised her eyes with steely lights in their gray depths. "I think I hardly need tell you I refused him, as you already know my aversion to marrying a title."

Mrs. Van Fleet's fingers interlocked nervously, and she walked over to the dressing table, fingering

the clutter of jeweled toilet articles scattered about it. She turned once and endeavored to speak, but colored under the level gaze of her daughter's eyes; her lips quivered in uncontrol, and a dull red burned in her face.

But she pulled herself together and began brokenly: "Justine, you—you can't mean——"

"Why, certainly; have I not said repeatedly I would *never* marry a title? And surely it can't be the *man* you want me to marry, Mama, because you have always been so very explicit in your commands, and insisted upon my not encouraging his attentions. You know it was always 'shake hands, ten paces, and your choice of weapons' with you and Dav—er—Mr. Coventry from the very first."

"But I didn't know——"

"That's just it; *you* didn't know and *I* didn't know. But as soon as I found out——"

"Could anything be more absurd! Yes, as soon as you find he is not a mere nameless nobody—why, the Baronet says they are the very *dearest* of friends, so much so"—this with the air of one clinching an argument—"so much so that—that he often borrows money of Mr. Coventry! Then, as soon as you find he is the possessor of a title——"

"I refused him; certainly."

Her lips came together in a straight, decisive line, and she leaned back, her hands clasped luxuriously behind her head, as if the subject were of small import and its interest exhausted. But laughter lingered in the depths of her eyes, and she watched her mother slyly under half-lowered lids, as she paced the floor, her long blue dressing-gown swishing behind her. She was seething with inward rage, not only at her daughter's stubborn per-

sistence, but at her own humiliating attitude in the affair throughout. Exhausted, she dropped down limply into a chair, her chin on her hand, and sunk into meditation as melancholy as that of Marianna in the Moated Grange.

Looking up, the daughter was moved to sympathy and mirth at her mother's face. She stretched out her hands with a burst of low laughter. "Oh, Mumsey, don't look like that! You haven't heard the clods rattle on the coffin of your buried hopes—quite. I *did* refuse him at Cairo, and I meant to stick to it, too; but, you see"—this with a beaming look and a rush of color—"I—I didn't quite realize that I was giving up the man, too. I found that out after—after I had sent him away."

Her voice took on vibrant undertones of feeling, and she twisted the little diamond band on her finger till it winked mysteriously in the firelight.

"No," she went on dreamily, "I didn't realize at first that I had sent away the *man* as well as the title. But to-night, in—in the tea-room——"

Mrs. Van Fleet sat up very straight and the light of hope sprang to her faded eyes.

"Justine! You did—you didn't—do you mean——"

"That—that to-night in the tea-room he argued the case again and I reconsidered. I decided that it was a mean thing to let his old title come between us and—and happiness; because really, you know, he's not to blame for it at all. And he made me see that he really *isn't*. I couldn't seem to give him up—when it wasn't his fault. So just as a sort of sop to Cerberus, you know, I took the title for *your* sake, Mumsey—and for my own—the man."

Personal Pages by the Publishers

The Red Book Coupon System

By Louis Guenther, Editor of "The Mail Order Journal."

Often am I interested in an advertisement, intending to reply to it, when something else diverts my thought. I forget it. Memory is too short to rely upon the morrow.

Stationery is never about and it is too inconvenient to write while traveling. Thus through our different human vagaries are our good resolutions swept aside.

[These coupons are intended to make it easy for you to answer any advertisement in The Red Book. Just fill in the name of the advertiser to whom you wish to write; the article for which you wish to write; and your own name and address. Then cut or tear out the coupon, place it in an envelope and mail to the advertiser. He will do the rest.]

June Red Book
CUT OUT THIS COUPON

To

Send me

Name

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Personal Pages by the Publishers

And who likes writing letters? It is more a bore than a pleasure, and avoided as much as possible. Who are the sufferers? We three—the advertiser, who has lost a possible customer; the publisher, who likes to see us both pleased, and myself, in missing something I wanted.

I warrant your readers will recognize in this an experience of their

own, and your splendid coupon system will help us gratify our wishes.

These coupons just seem to plead to be our secretary. "Tear us out, fill us in, and send us on our mission," they seem to say. And there are enough of them to send for many desirable things among the advertisements; besides using them in answering advertisements elsewhere.

This coupon is clipped from the Coupon System inaugurated by The Red Book. It is a distinct and exclusive feature of this Magazine and is expressly designed to serve the reader as a convenience and to stimulate inquiries and orders for the advertiser.

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By this time your readers must have learned the value of these useful coupons, and the advertisers felt it. To me they certainly appear to have solved how to bridge the chasm between desire and action. They bring the readers and advertisers closer together, by offering a quick

facility to the one to make known his wishes to the other without causing any inconvenience. Nothing will make us do a thing so quickly as the absence of that annoyance—the getting around to paper and ink!

Then those coupons tempt the reader, after being entertained with

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Personal Pages by the Publishers

good fiction, to turn to the advertising pages. In this bazaar of good things they point out something that might be wanted, and they are always on hand ready to be sent after the article, or the many articles, which have attracted attention.

I am sure these coupons will be ambassadors of much good. Your readers, now that they have the

quick means to write, will consult the advertising pages more often; the advertisers will receive more inquiries—these are the forerunners of business. While to you is reserved the satisfaction in the knowledge that you have brought in closer touch the two sources of revenue—those sources which support the growing popularity of the RED BOOK.

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Personal Pages by the Publishers

When the manager of one of the biggest news-stands in the country remarked the other day, "THE RED BOOK doesn't need any special pushing on my part. It seems to sell itself if I leave it out where people see it," he paid the Publishers of THE RED BOOK a compliment which any ambitious man would enjoy and appreciate.

That is the kind of magazine we have been trying to make, one that would sell itself and continue to sell itself from month to month.

In the beginning of our second year, we are testing the success of our efforts to make a magazine that the people want. Our first list of annual subscribers is expiring, and we have been watching the mails with exceptional interest to see whether or not we have succeeded in serving these early friends of THE RED BOOK in such a way as to earn their continued favor. For, knowing as we do that the oldest and most experienced magazine publishers are annually confronted with the problem of securing new subscribers to take the place of old ones whose subscriptions are not renewed, we are naturally interested in knowing whether or not our friends are going to stick to us.

While we have not been surprised, we have been very much gratified to note that an exceptionally large share of our old subscribers have renewed for another year, and in many cases have included a subscription for some friend. With the renewals have come expressions of appreciation that encourage us in our efforts to make a magazine that all the people want.

A business man who lives in a little town in Connecticut, and who has his office in New York, in sending his check for his second year's subscription writes: "Every member of my family agrees with me that THE RED BOOK meets all our wants in a

magazine better than anything else that comes to our home."

A young woman who is an enthusiastic amateur photographer, and at the same time a great reader, congratulates herself on being able to secure in one magazine the finest examples of photographic art, and the brightest and best illustrated fiction.

Hundreds of letters have been received in which the writers have expressed their appreciation of the fact that we do not ask them to "wait until the end of the year for the end of the story."

A prominent author, who is not a contributor to THE RED BOOK, voiced a general thought when he expressed his pleasure in finding a magazine that supplied illustrations which really picture the story.

Another thing that has to some extent indicated the class of people who are interested in RED BOOK fiction is the fact that we have received so large a number of personal checks for subscriptions. A personal check indicates a bank account and a bank account means buying capacity. Our advertisers will be interested in this fact.

The attitude of our annual subscribers is not the only thing about which we feel pleased. The Publishers have taken a great deal of satisfaction in the character of the reports from newsdealers. The manager of a large news-stand expressed the state of affairs the other day when he said, "Of course, we are in this business to make all the money we can, and at the same time build up our business for the future. We sell the things with which we know the people will be satisfied, for that brings them back to us. We have discovered that when we sell a RED BOOK to one of our regular customers he continues to buy it. We have been increasing our orders every month."

Personal Pages by the Publishers

The July RED BOOK will be full of summer fiction of the most readable sort, written by authors of high standing, who in many instances seem to have outdone themselves in their effort to furnish this magazine with their best work.

The leading story in the July RED BOOK is "HONG KONG HO, A TALE OF THE HARE AND TORTOISE," by Samuel Merwin, author of "The Road to Frontenac," and co-author with Henry Kitchell Webster of "The Short Line War" and "Calumet K." "Hong Kong Ho" is a masterpiece of the business type of stories so widely favored nowadays, in which the activities of commercial life offer a new field for comedy, melodrama, romance and even tragedy. This is a story of American enterprise in England and Germany, showing how two young business men contended for a prize in rapid construction of great warehouses, with the peculiar local conditions against which they had to strive and, of course, a business man's love story running through the narrative. The story has been illustrated effectively by John Clitheroe Gilbert.

Another story of peculiar interest is "AFTERWARDS," by Kenneth Brown. Mr. Brown is known to RED BOOK readers as the author of "The Somersault Pony," a humorous tale of life in India which was published in the April RED BOOK. In the present instance he returns to American scenes, with the Rocky Mountains and an Atlantic Ocean summer resort as localities. The story includes a touch of the occult, and is appreciatively illustrated by Walter Whitehead.

Alva Milton Kerr, author of many popular railway stories, has written for THE RED BOOK one of the best of these under the title "A LUCKY LANDSLIDE." It relates an amusing incident of railway construction in

the Colorado Mountains, the incidents depending on local jealousies, controversies between railway company and village citizens, and the difficulty of operating trains in a country that stands on edge. Edgar Bert Smith has illustrated the story.

"THE ROYAL AGRA," by Beatrice Elise Rice, is a story which begins in India and ends in Bar Harbor, with Hindoos, Englishmen and Americans as characters. The denouement of the story is at the same time tragic and fantastic, but the delicacy with which the author has handled a novel situation gives the tale a strength and interest which make it noteworthy. The prediction is ventured that any one who reads the story and looks at the striking illustrations by Victor R. Lambdin which accompany it, will find it resting in his memory as a story to be remembered and told when the lights are low.

Hayden Carruth, among the most popular humorous short story writers of the day, author of "The Adventures of Jones," "The Voyage of the Rattletrap," and other clever books, and highly favored by RED BOOK readers, returns in the July number with one of his characteristic stories, "MR. WEATHERTREE'S DIAMOND RING." It relates the unfortunate difficulties in which Mr. Weathertree found himself when he unwisely tried to mislead the wife of his bosom in regard to the place and the hour of certain events. Dan Sayre Groesbeck illustrates the story, with drawings which happily interpret the narrative.

Other authors included in the list of contributors to the July RED BOOK are Ruth Kimball Gardiner, R. J. Sterrett, F. B. Yarnall, Mabel S. Merrill and Arthur Welch, and other artists contributing illustrations are Walter J. Enright, K. Sayonara, Ruth M. Hallock and F. S. Manning.